

A
SHORT ACCOUNT
OF THE
RISE AND PROGRESS
OF THE
African Methodist Episcopal Church
IN AMERICA.

WRITTEN
CHRISTOPHER RUSH.
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CONNEXION;
WITH THE AID OF GEORGE COLLINS.

ALSO, A CONCISE VIEW OF
CHURCH ORDER OR GOVERNMENT,
FROM SCRIPTURE AND FROM SOME OF THE BEST AUTHORS ON THE
SUBJECT OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, RELATIVE TO
EPISCOPACY.

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Southern District of New-York, ss.

L. S. **B**E IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-third day of November, A. D., 1843, Christopher Rush, of the said District, has deposited in this Office the title of a Book, the title of which is in the words following, to wit :

“ A short account of the Rise and Progress of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in America, written by Christopher Rush, Superintendent of the Connexion, with the aid of George Collins. Also, a concise view of Church order or government, from Scripture and from some of the best authors on the subject of Church government, relative to Episcopacy:”—the right whereof he claims as Author and Proprietor. In conformity with an act of Congress, entitled “ An Act to amend the several Acts respecting copy-rights.”

CHARLES D. BETTS,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

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AN APOLOGY FOR WRITING.

Conscious of my inability for so important a work as the following, in consequence of a very limited education, I have no doubt but that there may be many defects found, especially in this age of learning ; but, as my intention was not to set forth a show of rhetorical flourishes, but a concise view of the subject, as the nature of things would admit, it is hoped, therefore, should any defects be found, that a generous public will make allowance, as the nature of the case may to them seem to demand.

I am, yours,

C. RUSH.

P R E F A C E .

The design of this Treatise is to present to the view of the members of the Church in particular, and the public in general, the manner in which the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was formed and established in the city of New-York, and how she became the Mother Church of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in America, and her Rise and Progress; also, to give a view of my thoughts and knowledge of the subject of Church Government, as an Episcopal Church, shewing, for the satisfaction of the ministers and members especially, and the public in general, that the “African Methodist Episcopal Church in America,” is founded upon as good ba-

sis as any Church in the United States of America. And supposing that this view will come in contact with the opinions of some who may differ on the subject of Episcopacy, I wish it to be distinctly understood that it is done without any bad feelings towards any of the brethren, or any of our sister Churches who are not connected with us, nor with any intention to exalt my opinion above others; but purposely to give my views upon Scripture testimonies and upon the writings of some of the best authors on the subject of Church Government, and I shall feel willing they should undergo an impartial investigation.

This method will also show to all who may desire information on the subject of proper or authentic organization of Church Government, relative to Episcopacy, that we did not spring up like mushrooms, (as some unfriendly persons would like to have it published and believed, to suit their own purposes,) but that we came in possession of that title by deliberate gradation, and have as good right as any other Episcopal Church, to be styled the "African Methodist Episcopal Church in America."

In the prosecution of this work I shall naturally labour under many disadvantages, and therefore cannot promise

to give an account of every particular circumstance which took place, especially in the formation and establishment of Zion Church in the city of New-York, as forty-four years have passed away since the commencement, and many transactions which might have been pleasing to relate, have passed away with them, there having been no record kept of them by any person, and the memory being too weak to retain them. But I purpose to give some of the leading and most essential circumstances, which occurred during the progression, so far as may be in my power, in order to make this concise narration as interesting as my limited means will admit.

Hoping and praying that the undertaking may give satisfaction to all into whose hands it may come, I close by subscribing myself your sincere brother in the Lord and well-wisher,

CHRISTOPHER RUSH.

A
SHORT ACCOUNT
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CHAPTER I.

Of the Formation and Establishment of Zion Church.

In the year 1796, when the coloured members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of New-York became increased, and feeling a desire for the privilege of holding meetings of their own, where they might have an opportunity to exercise their spiritual gifts among themselves, and thereby be more useful one to the other, a few of the most intelligent of our brethren obtained permission from Bishop FRANCIS ASBURY, to hold meetings by themselves, in the intervals of the regular preaching hours of our white brethren, in the best manner they could. The

names of some of the men who went forward in this dawning of religious privileges, were Francis Jacobs, William Brown, Peter Williams, Abraham Thompson, June Scott, Samuel Pontier, Thomas Miller, William Miller, James Varick, William Hamilton, and some others whose names are not now recollected, who united together, and by some means hired a house in Cross Street, between Mulberry and Orange Streets, which formerly was a stable, but at that time was occupied by William Miller as a cabinet-maker's shop, which house they fitted up with seats and a pulpit, and also a gallery. In this house they held prayer meetings on Sunday afternoons, in the interval of Divine service among our white brethren, between afternoon and evening or night service, and held also preaching and exhorting meetings on Wednesday nights, by such of our coloured brethren that were licensed to preach and exhort. At this time there were, in the city of New-York, three Licensed Preachers, viz. Abraham Thompson, June Scott and Thomas Miller, and William Miller, Exhorter, who officiated as they had opportunity, and once in a while they were aided by coloured preachers from Philadelphia and other places. In this way they continued until some time in the year 1799, when the number of coloured members, of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of New-York, became further increased, and as the seats in the church among our white brethren were limited, they began to think about building a House of Worship for themselves, and to form themselves into a body corporate, separate from the white church, according to the privilege granted to religious societies by the laws of the state of New-York. For this

purpose they called a meeting of some of the most respectable and intelligent religious coloured men of the city, in order to consult upon the best method to proceed in this great undertaking, for coloured people in the city of New-York.

The meeting was held in their Meeting-house in Cross Street, but the names of the persons who attended this meeting are not now recollected, as the minutes have not been preserved; we can only add, from strength of memory, to those already given in the commencement, George E. Moore, Thomas Sipkins, David Bias, George White, Thomas Cook, John Teesman, and George Collins. After they had duly considered the object of the meeting, they concluded that the Church should be under the Methodist government, and should be named the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. They then appointed nine Trustees, to attend to the business of the Church and getting up the house of worship, among whom were Francis Jacobs, William Brown, Thomas Miller, Peter Williams, Thomas Sipkins, William Hamilton, and George Collins; the names of the others are at present forgotten. Francis Jacobs was appointed Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Thomas Miller, Treasurer, and George Collins, Secretary. The Trustees then issued subscriptions, and solicited the citizens of New-York for aid to build the contemplated house for religious worship; and when they had collected eighty dollars, they deposited the same in the hands of the Treasurer, Thomas Miller, and being anxious to commence the operation of building, they immediately appointed

him to go forward and procure a spot of ground for that purpose. According to appointment, the Treasurer, Thomas Miller, purchased a lot of ground, twenty-five feet front and seventy-five or one hundred feet deep, in Orange Street, between Cross and Chatham Streets, for which he paid the eighty dollars on account, and obtained a deed for the same, in his own name ; but upon examination it was found that it was not a suitable place to erect a church, for the purpose contemplated, especially when they found that he would not consent to have the deed altered, which caused much dissatisfaction in the minds of the Trustees ; and being thus disappointed, (but not discouraged,) Francis Jacobs, who was appointed Chairman of the Trustees, being a very intelligent man and of good repute, undertook the procuring a suitable place for the Church, and for this purpose he consulted with William Brown, who united with him, and they went forward and obtained two lots of ground, each twenty-five feet front and seventy-five feet deep, situate at the corner of Church and Leonard Streets, and fronting on Church Street, which circumstance renewed the courage of the Trustees, who agreed to accept the said ground, and resolved upon its being a suitable place for the contemplated building.

The lots of ground being now procured and agreed upon to be the place where the Church, or house of worship, should be erected, the Trustees took fresh courage, and joyfully renewed their efforts to collect money for that purpose. They therefore went forward with their subscription books, and solicited the public generally for aid in this great and laudable work, for the benefit of coloured

people, in the city of New-York, and in the month of September, or October, of the year 1800, they effected a framed building, on the aforesaid spot of ground, thirty-five feet wide and forty-five feet long, which was dedicated for the House of God, and named the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

CHAPTER II.

*Of the Charter and of the Articles of Agreement with the
White General Conference.*

When our white brethren, the Ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, found that we were determined upon becoming a separate body, or society, they appointed the Rev. John McClaskey, at their General Conference, who was one of the stationed Elders for the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of New-York, to make arrangements and effect some articles of agreement with us for our government, in order that the spiritual part of the government might be under the direction of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church from time to time, and so keep the two Churches or Societies in union with each other, and secure to the aforesaid General Conference the ecclesiastical part of the government. The Rev. John McClaskey, being a man of friendly disposition towards us, commenced his mission by giving us some friendly advice, and aided to draw up the instrument of writing, which was necessary to present to the Master in Chancery, in order to obtain our Incorporation ; which, with the Articles of Agreement, we will give from the original, as follows :

CHARTER OF THE AFRICAN CHURCH.

In pursuance of an Act, entitled an Act, to enable all the religious denominations of this State to appoint Trustees, who shall be a body corporate, for the purpose of taking care of the temporalities of their respective congregations, and for other purposes therein mentioned; passed the 6th day of April, 1784; public notice was given, in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (called Zion Church) of the city of New-York, in the state of New-York, as the aforesaid law directs: and we, the subscribers, being nominated and appointed agreeably to the aforesaid Act, Inspectors of an Election held in our place of meeting, the eighth day of September, 1800, do report and declare the following persons duly elected by a plurality of voices, to serve as Trustees for the said Church, viz., Francis Jacobs, George Collins, Thomas Sipkins, George E. Moore, George White, David Bias, Peter Williams, Thomas Cook, and William Brown; which said persons, so elected, and their successors in office, shall forever be styled and denominated The Trustees of the Corporation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of New-York.

Given under our hands and seals, this fifth day of February, one thousand eight hundred and one.

his
 PETER \times WILLIAMS.
 mark.
 FRANCIS JACOBS.

State of New-York, ss.

On this sixteenth day of February, 1801, before me personally came, Peter Williams and Francis Jacobs, to me known to be the persons within described, and who executed the within conveyance, who duly acknowledged the same—and there being no material erasures or interlineations therein, I do allow it to be recorded.

(*signed*) JAMES M. HUGHES,
Master in Chancery.

Recorded in the office of the Clerk of the city and county of New-York, in Lib. No. I, of Record of Incorporation of Religious Denominations, page 28, this ninth day of March, 1801. Examined by

(*signed*) ROBERT BENSON, *Clerk.*

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ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT,

Made the sixth day of April, 1801, between the Rev.

John McClaskey, in behalf of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the United States of America, of the one part, and the Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of New-York, of the other part, sheweth, for themselves and their successors in office :

ARTICLE I.

It is provided and declared that the style and title of this Corporation shall be the “The African Methodist Episcopal Church of the city of New-York, in the state of New York,” and shall consist of Francis Jacobs, George

Collins, Thomas Sipkins, George E. Moore, George White, David Bias, Peter Williams, Thomas Cook and William Brown, Trustees and Members of Zion Church, and their successors, duly qualified, elected and appointed according to law (for the purposes and with the powers and privileges hereinafter granted and specified) of the Church called Zion Church, and of all and every such other church and churches as do now or hereafter shall become the property of the Corporation.

ARTICLE II.

The Corporation aforesaid and their successors for ever, do, and shall have and hold the said building called Zion Church, and all other churches which are now or shall become the property of the Corporation, in trust, for the religious use of the Ministers and Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who are in connection with the General Conference of the said church, and likewise for our African brethren and the descendants of the African race, as hereafter specified, and also for Ministers and Teachers of our African brethren, duly licensed or ordained according to the form of discipline.

ARTICLE III.

It is provided and declared, that the rents, issues, profits and interests of the real and personal estate, of and belonging to the said Church and Trustees, and their successors, shall from time to time be applied and laid out for repairing and maintaining their said Zion Church, and all and any other place or places of public worship, lot or lots of ground, burial grounds, or buildings which now do, or

at any time hereafter may or shall belong to the said Church or Trustees, as shall from time to time be thought proper and expedient, by the Trustees for the time being; and if the funds and revenues be sufficient, the Trustees may and shall be permitted, in their own discretion, to allow a reasonable and proportionable part for the support of the Ministers.

ARTICLE IV.

It is provided and declared, that the said Trustees and their successors shall not, by deed or otherwise, grant, alien, convey, or otherwise dispose of any part or parcel of the estate, real or personal, in the said Corporation, vested or to be vested, or in any other way to mortgage or pledge the said real estate, for the payment of any debts by them contracted to any person or persons whatever, unless such grant, alienation and conveyance, be made by and with the consent of two-thirds of the regular male members of the said church, of at least twenty-one years of age, and one year's standing.

ARTICLE V.

It is provided and declared, that none but Africans or their descendants shall be chosen as Trustees of the said African Episcopal Zion Church, and such other church or churches as may or shall hereafter become the property of this Corporation, and none shall be eligible to the office of a Trustee, but such as are received and acknowledged to be members of the said church, by the elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of New-York, who shall be appointed by the Conference of the said

church, to the charge of the Methodist Society in the said city.

ARTICLE VI.

All elections for Trustees for the aforesaid Zion Church, shall be by ballot of the male members, in close communion with them, or as many of them as attend, after being duly warned thereto; and no one shall have a right to vote for Trustees, until he has been a member standing in full connection, one year at least: and no person shall be chosen a Trustee of the said Corporation, until the said person shall have been a member in full connection and standing, at least two years. And no person shall be admitted into close connection with their classes, or be enrolled on their books, but Africans and descendants of the African race.

ARTICLE VII. to time, for a

It is provided and declared, that the Trustees aforesaid, and their successors for ever, are and shall be empowered to have, and shall have the entire direction and disposal of the temporal revenue of the aforesaid African Zion Church; and after paying the ground rent of the said church, are to apply the remainder for the benefit of the said church, as a majority of the aforesaid Trustees and their successors shall from time to time direct. And the aforesaid Trustees and their successors forever, shall have the disposal and management of the temporal concerns of the aforesaid African Methodist Episcopal Church, subject, nevertheless, to the provisions, and under the regu-

lations made and provided in the fourth article of this instrument.

ARTICLE VIII.

It is declared, that the Trustees and members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, do acquiesce and accord with the rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for their church government and discipline, and with their creeds and articles of faith; and that they and their successors will continue for ever in union with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of New-York, subject to the government of the present Bishops and their successors, in all their ecclesiastical affairs and transactions, (except in the temporal right and property of the aforesaid Zion Church, which is to be governed as herein directed) as long as the said articles and creeds of the said church remain unchanged.

ARTICLE IX.

It is declared, that the Elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for the time being, in the City of New-York, appointed as aforementioned, shall have the direction and management of the spiritual concerns of the said Zion Church, or any other church or churches which may or shall be built hereafter by the Corporation aforesaid, or by any other means become their property, agreeably to the form of discipline of the said Methodist Episcopal Church. Provided always that the said Elder shall receive no person into the African Society, but such as are previously recommended by a Trustee or Trustees of the said African Zion Church. And upon complaint being made to the

said African Church or to the Elder, of any of its members having walked disorderly, they shall be dealt with according to the form of discipline : provided always, that their triers be members of their own Church, and that the member, if condemned in the first trial, have an appeal to the Trustees, Local Preachers, exhorters and class leaders of the aforesaid Zion Church. And it is further declared, that no person who may come recommended to the Elder from other societies, as a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, shall be admitted or considered as a member of the African Church, if he refuse to have his name registered in the books of the said Zion Church, after notice given him.

ARTICLE X.

It is agreed and declared that the Elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of New-York, appointed as aforesaid, shall from time to time, for ever hereafter, nominate the Preacher who shall officiate in said African Methodist Episcopal Church, and any and all other church or churches, which shall hereafter become the property of the Corporation, and shall attend to the said Church or Churches himself, to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as often as he the said Elder can make it convenient. And the said Elder, for the time being, shall license to exhort and preach, any one or more of the brethren, who are or shall be members of the said church, and shall appear, to the satisfaction of the said Elder, to be adequate to the task, and to have grace and gifts proper to appear in public : Provided always, that such persons are previously recommended to him by a

majority of the Trustees, local preachers, exhorters and class leaders of the aforesaid church. And if either of the said African brethren shall graduate into holy orders, it shall be done in such manner and way as the General Conference has directed. And it is provided and agreed, that the said Elder may claim, for himself and his white brethren, and shall have and possess a right to preach once on every Sunday, and once during the course of the week (and no more when there is a sufficient number of African Preachers) in any or all the houses set apart and built, or to be set apart and built, by the aforesaid Trustees or their successors, of the said African Zion Church, in the city and suburbs of New York.

ARTICLE XI.

It is provided and declared, that no powers and authorities hereby given to the aforementioned Trustees, shall be understood, taken or construed in any wise to prohibit or prevent the Elder for the time being, duly authorised and appointed as aforesaid, the religious use, benefit and enjoyment of the Church known by the name of Zion Church, or of any other church or churches, which at any time hereafter may be purchased or built by the said Corporation, or in any other way become their property, in the city of New-York or the suburbs thereof; but that the same shall be and forever hereafter continue to be had, used and enjoyed by the said Elder for the time being, as heretofore; and by no other person whatever, of another denomination, unless by the particular license and consent of the Elder for the time being, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the Trustees for the time being;

any thing to the contrary in these articles notwithstanding.

(*signed*)

FRANCIS JACOBS.

^{his}
THOMAS \times SIPKINS.
^{mark.}

GEORGE E. MOORE.

^{his}
GEORGE \times WHITE.
^{mark.}

GEORGE COLLINS.

^{his}
PETER \times WILLIAMS.
^{mark.}

THOMAS COOK.

^{his}
WILLIAM \times BROWN.
^{mark.}

DAVID BIAS.

Having given a copy of our Incorporation, and of the Articles of Agreement between us and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, by which rules and regulations our Zion Church was governed from that time down to the year 1820, it may be necessary to state just here, that the lot of ground which was purchased by our brother, Thomas Miller, according to appointment, being found an unfit place to build the Church upon, (and the aforementioned two lots of ground having been obtained, which the Trustees accepted and agreed upon to be the place whereon to build the contemplated house of worship) it was left on his hands—and the aforesaid eighty dollars, which was paid on ac-

count of the lot, being money collected from the public, he found himself in an unpleasant situation, and that it was necessary to sell the said lot of ground, in order to regain the eighty dollars which he had paid for the same ; therefore, when he had found a purchaser, he requested the Trustees to take the lot of ground, and sell it according to authority vested in them by their Incorporation, which they did, and thereby relieved him from censure.

CHAPTER III.

Of Leasing and Purchasing Ground, &c.

In this place it may be proper, also, to relate that the aforesaid two lots of ground, at the corner of Church and Leonard Streets, were leased for twenty-one years, with the privilege of purchasing them at any time previous to the expiration of that term, the price being fixed and agreed upon for that purpose, and inserted in the Lease, which was dated July 21st, 1800, and the names of the Trustees chosen for the Lease, were Francis Jacobs, William Brown, Thomas Sipkins, George White, George E. Moore, Thomas Cook, George Collins and Peter Williams. The lot of ground adjoining in the rear of the two lots leased as aforesaid, fronting on Leonard Street twenty-five feet, and one hundred feet deep, being offered for sale a while after the Church was built, the Trustees embraced the opportunity and bought it, and having obtained an old house for a small amount, they brought it on the Lot, and repaired and fixed it up, with a little addition, for a dwelling house, which continued in use until the building of the brick house now on the same lot, bearing the No. 62 Leonard Street. In a few years after the building of the aforesaid Church, it was found to be

too small for the congregation, so that the Trustees saw it necessary to lengthen the house, and they accordingly added to it fifteen or twenty feet more. The vacant parts of the Lots, which were appropriated for our burying ground, were so small and sandy, that the Trustees were obliged to build vaults for Interments in our Church-yard, and after the city was visited with the Yellow Fever, when the Corporation of the city prohibited the opening of graves and vaults in the thickly inhabited parts of the city, in the summer season, the Trustees applied to them for a place for a burying ground, as the Church was not able to purchase ground for that purpose at that time, and on the 17th August, 1807, the Corporation allotted them a place in the (then) Pottersfield, (which is now called Washington Parade Ground) which the Trustees fenced in, and used in the summer season of every year, until the Corporation of the city thought proper to fill up the said Pottersfield, and improve it as it now is. Then the Trustees purchased some lots of ground at Yorkville, and appropriated seven lots for a burying ground.

A few years previous to the expiration of the aforementioned Lease of the two lots of ground, say in the year 1806, the Rev. John Wilson, having the charge of our Zion Church, by appointment of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Trustees began to make some efforts for raising an amount of money sufficient to make a purchase of the aforesaid two lots of ground, in order to annul the Lease, and secure the lots by obtaining a Deed for them; and in doing this, they were much aided by our Elder in charge, who seemed to

take a special interest in the welfare of our Church, by his friendly and brotherly advice from time to time, during his appointment with us, but especially in the case of raising an amount of money for the aforesaid purpose. He advised the Trustees to issue subscriptions for the coloured population, and to get the members of the Church to give a certain amount according to their ability, and he actively enforced the necessity of the contribution, and encouraged the members of the Church in particular, and of the congregation generally to contribute, so that there was a sufficient amount gathered to make the aforesaid purchase, and thereby secured the ground, by obtaining a Deed for the same. This was the first time that our coloured citizens were solicited for aid by subscription for the benefit of the Church, as the Trustees had heretofore confined their solicitations to the white citizens. The lot of ground adjoining on the side of the two that were Leased, which also fronted on Church Street 25 feet, and 75 feet deep, was purchased by the Trustees on the 8th of April, 1801, for \$750. The time that was agreed upon for the white Elder to preach in our Zion Church, was on Sunday afternoon and on Wednesday night of every week, except on the days of the administration of the Lord's Supper, then his appointment was on Sunday morning, and was agreed upon to be the *second* Sunday of every month, because the first Sunday in the month was the time for administering the Sacrament in his own church; and our coloured brethren preached on Sunday mornings and evenings and on Friday nights. The work of the Lord prospered greatly in the church, and the number of members of the Society and of the congregation, continued

rapidly to increase, so that the enemy of souls began to be angry at the prosperity of the church, and sought opportunities to hinder her progress. The first attempt he made, was with the two eldest preachers of our Society, viz. Abraham Thompson and June Scott, who were induced by the expectation of filthy lucre to try the formation of a society separate from Zion Church. The manner of the attempt (so far as can be recollected) was as follows : A white man, named John Edwards, a scale-beam maker, who had been a member of the Friends' Society, but had been expelled therefrom, and at this time professed to be a preacher according to the order of the Friends' Society, (and was sometimes a kind of troublesome man, acting as if he did not enjoy his right mind) having a lot of ground in Green Street, No. 101, and being desirous to have a place where he might preach occasionally himself, he aided some coloured men, who applied to him, to build a house upon it for a church, which was so constructed as to have two wings for the residence of the preachers who might become attached to the intended society. Our brother, Abraham Thompson, being made acquainted with the supposed favourable circumstance, and hoping to have, at least, a place of residence gratis, and thereby receive some compensation for his labours as a preacher, he consented to become one of the preachers, and having persuaded brother June Scott, to unite with him, they formed a society which was styled "The Union Society." This position of our old brethren caused the minds of many of the members of Zion Church to be measurably divided and inclined to follow them ; but this first stratagem of the enemy soon failed, for when the official members of Zion

Church found out the intrigue of the enemy, and was on the eve of expelling all those of her members who were aiding in the formation of the Union Society, Abraham Thompson left June Scott, came forward, and pleaded ignorance in what he was doing, and thus saved his membership in Zion Church, as did all the others that were fearful ; but June Scott would not return to Zion—he kept his position until it was found that the Union Society was not able to bear its expenses, and was therefore obliged to give up the premises to the said John Edwards, the owner of the ground. The Society consequently was broken up, and June Scott attached himself to another church.

It may be proper to remark, that, at this time, our coloured brethren were not allowed any thing as a compensation for preaching for us, as the (white) Elder who had the charge of the church from time to time, claimed that part of the funds and revenues that the Trustees could afford to allow, at that time, for the support of the Ministers.

The next attempt to hinder the progress of Zion Church, took place some time in the year 1818, in another underhanded manner : our brother, Thomas Sipkins, who had been a member and Trustee of Zion Church, and had been expelled therefrom, for being somewhat headstrong and rather ungovernable, determined that he would never join her again, and there being no other Methodist church of coloured people in the city, he became lonesome and wanted company, (as he said himself,) and therefore

sought a method to obtain associates ; he therefore found a situation for sale, in Elizabeth Street, between Walker and Hester Streets, with a church on it, which he resolved upon endeavouring to get possession of, for the purpose of forming a society separate from Zion Church, and thereby have a place of worship where he might enjoy himself independent of Zion Church. With this view he consulted with William Miller, (who at this time had become an ordained Deacon in Zion Church,) and the interview terminated in an agreement between them ; and when they had obtained possession of the aforesaid situation in Elizabeth Street, and had persuaded a number of the official and private members of Zion Church with enticing words to unite with them, they effected the formation of a society, which they styled the "Asbury Church."

This stratagem of the enemy proved effectual, relative to forming a separate society, as our brother William Miller actively used his influence to entice as many as he could to leave Zion Church and unite with them ; but it was done without any essential injury to her notwithstanding.

It was thought by some observers of their movements, that the Asburians did not intend to be under the same church government as the Zioners ; but being disappointed in their expectation, they found it necessary to make application to brother Phineas Cook, the Elder in charge of Zion Church at that time, requesting a consideration of their case relative to the spiritual concern of their

church. Brother Cook then requested an interview with the Trustees of Zion Church on the subject, and got brother Thomas Ware, an Elder of the white Methodist church in the city, to accompany him at the meeting, which was held at the residence of brother William Brown, Treasurer of Zion Church, in Nassau Street, one door from the corner of (then) Fair (now) Fulton Street, and after considerable consultation on the case, the two aforesaid Elders having obtained the consent of the Trustees, concluded to receive the Asburians into connexion with the Methodist church.

The work of the Lord continued to prosper in Zion Church, and the number of the members, both of the church and of the congregation, so rapidly increased, that the Trustees, viz. William Brown, John Dias, Thomas Jenkins, Charles Tredwell, Tobias Hawkins, Philip Searing, Epiphany Davis, Isaac Benson and George Collins, found their house of worship too small for the increased number of attendants on Divine worship, and being much decayed, they were induced to consult about building a larger and more substantial house, with a school-room underneath, on the site of the old house, and on the 25th day of November, 1818, a committee was appointed to obtain estimates from master builders, in order to understand the cost of the same, and on the 13th of July, 1819, they contracted with Messrs. James Dubois and Thompson Price, to build a house fifty-five feet wide and seventy feet long, of stone, for the sum of eleven thousand five hundred dollars.

On the 16th of July, 1819, the Trustees agreed to commence building the foundation around the old house, which was done and carried up nearly to the water table, except the front ; but in consequence of the want of money they were obliged to stop the work, and agreed with the builders to cover up the walls, hoping to be able by the following spring to proceed. The Trustees petitioned the Legislature of the State for aid towards the School-room, hoping to obtain from them a small part, at least, of the amount of money which was allowed, according to a law of the state, to be appropriated for the use of public schools ; but they did not succeed.

The next spring, in the month of May, 1820, the old house was taken down, by agreement of the Trustees, and being unable to procure a suitable place large enough for the congregation, they were obliged to hire the privilege of a Riding Circus, in Broadway, between Hester (now Howard) and Grand Streets, in which we held meetings morning and afternoon on Sundays, and on Sunday evenings and week nights we held our meetings in a house in Rose Street, between Pearl and Duane Streets, called the Rose Street Academy.

The old house being pulled down, the Trustees were anxious to proceed with the new house ; but their prospects being not much better than before, in regard to the means for paying the builders, they found it essentially necessary to borrow three thousand dollars, in order to carry on the work, which amount they obtained from Mr.

James Bogert, on bond and mortgage, having obtained special permission from the Master in Chancery for that purpose, and on the 5th day of June, 1820, they recommenced the building.

CHAPTER IV.

Entrance of the Allenites in the city of New-York.

Soon after the recommencing of the building, another difficulty arose. A man, named William Lambert, who had been a member of Zion Church, and was one of those who went away to join the Asbury Church, (a kind of self-conceited man, who was anxious to become a preacher, but was thought not qualified for that office,) having been recommended by William Miller to Bishop Allen, in Philadelphia, (possibly in order to get rid of him,) he went on and attached himself to the Bethel Church, in that city, and having obtained license from the Bishop, as a kind of Missionary Preacher, he returned to New-York, and being denied the use of the Pulpit in the Asbury Church, he determined to raise a church or congregation for Bishop Allen's connexion; in order, therefore, to accomplish his purpose, he obtained a school-house in Mott Street, and with the assistance of George White, a member and ordained Deacon of our Church, it was fitted up for a church.

It was afterward understood that about this time there were considerable communications made, in a private

manner, between some of our official brethren in New-York and Bishop Allen in Philadelphia, relative to the state of Zion Church while the building was in progression, all which was unknown to the general body of the officers; and while our Society was in a scattered state, in consequence of not having a suitable place for Divine Worship, (for the Rose Street Academy was not large enough to accommodate our Society and congregation, and many of them we supposed did not like to go to the Circus in Broadway,) an Elder, from Bishop Allen's charge and appointment, named Henry Harden, arrived in this city, and commenced to form a society, with the assistance of the aforesaid William Lambert and George White, for the Bethel Church, so called.

The preachers of our Zion Church, (except the said George White,) believing that Bishop Allen had acted very unkind towards the church, by sending an Elder into this city, with intention to establish a third society of African Methodists, thereby taking the advantage of our present necessity, they met together and resolved not to preach for them, nor allow them to preach for us. In this resolution William Miller acquiesced, as the representative of the Asbury Church.

Their Church in Mott Street was consecrated on Sunday, the 23d day of July, 1820, and not long after the day of the consecration Bishop Allen himself arrived and sanctioned all that was done by those men, who were acting for the benefit of his connexion, and his presence seemed very soon to alter the minds of our preachers, for

notwithstanding their resolution to discountenance the proceedings of the Bishop, yet some of them went to their meetings, some of them sat in their altar, and one of them (James Varick) opened meeting for the Bishop on the second or third Sunday night of the existence of that Society.

CHAPTER V.

Commencement of withdrawing from our white brethren.

On Sunday night the 16th of July, 1820, the Elder, William M. Stilwell, who had the charge of Zion and Asbury Churches, came to the Rose Street Academy, a little before the conclusion of Divine Worship, and when the service was ended he informed the official brethren, as many as were present, that he and several hundred of his (white) brethren had that day withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, in consequence of some resolutions of their preachers in Conference, which they thought were improper measures for preachers of the Gospel to resort to, and which would be injurious to the temporal concerns of the church—the chief resolution was to petition the Legislature of the State of New York for a special Act of Incorporation, in order to give the preachers more power over the Trustees, in regard particularly to the temporalities of the churches under their government in this State. This information was somewhat alarming; for the Trustees and the other official members of our church had been several times threatened and spoken to unkindly by Elders having charge of the circuit and of

our church, which had already caused considerable dissatisfaction in the minds of the official brethren, and now to hear of this special Act of Incorporation, as aforesaid, they were roused to a consideration of what would be for the best interest of our Zion Church, and some of them imbibed a belief that the time had arrived when we might loosen Zion Church from under the government of the white Bishops and Conference. The following Tuesday, the 18th instant, the Trustees were notified to meet the Presiding Elder, at the residence of Peter Williams, in Liberty Street—they went accordingly, and Abraham Thompson, the oldest preacher and Deacon in our church, accompanied them to the place appointed, where they found the presiding Elder, Peter P. Sandford, Aaron Hunt, Joshua Souls and Thomas Mason. There were several questions and answers interchanged; the presiding Elder informed the Trustees that William M. Stilwell had withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and therefore had no further charge of our church, and that he wished to know what our church intended to do. The Trustees told him that they would consult on the case, and give him an answer as soon as possible. The Preachers of Zion Church being unpleasantly exercised in mind about a resolution of the white Methodist Preachers in one of their Conferences, relative to a Local Preachers' Conference, they had previously appointed a meeting, and had requested our Trustees to meet them and council each party in regard to what they had heard, and the appointed time happened to be on the night of the same day that the Trustees met the aforesaid Preachers at Peter Williams', in Liberty Street; they accordingly met together at the

residence of James Varick, in Orange Street, in order to see what was best to be done. After considerable consultation, they resolved to appoint Abraham Thompson, James Varick, John Dungy and George Collins a committee, to call on Doctor Phœbus, an old Elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (who was said to be neutral in the case of the division) and William M. Stilwell, to gain some further information on the subject, and to obtain from William M. Stilwell a copy of the resolution of the last General Conference, which had caused the schism in the white Methodist Church. They also agreed to request a meeting of all the official members of Zion Church, at the Rose Street Academy, the following Friday night, at which time they hoped to come to a final decision among the official brethren.

On Friday night, July 21st, 1820, the official members met together in the Rose Street Academy, according to request, and after due deliberation they agreed upon the following:—

WHEREAS, a very grievous schism has taken place in the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city, in consequence of a resolution of the last General Conference, and that resolution acted upon by the annual Conference of the New-York District, the substance of which is (as we are informed) that a memorial shall be drawn up, subscribers obtained by the Preachers, and the same to be presented to the Legislature of the State of New-York, at their next sitting, praying for a special Act of Incorporation, to suit the peculiarities of the Methodist Discipline, so that the

Preachers may have more authority to exercise their functions in the church than they now have ; and whereas, it is reported that, should the Legislature deem it expedient to grant the request of the memorialists and enact the said special Act of Incorporation, it will very materially change the present manner of conducting the temporal concerns of the said church ; (as the Trustees or Stewards to be appointed according to the contemplated mode, will hold the property of the Society in trust for the Preachers in Conference instead of, or more than for the members of the Society) and whereas, in consequence of the aforementioned schism, a very different explanation is given relative to the contents of the said memorial, and fearing that the said report is true, and that our church property will be involved in the same difficulties should the contemplated Act of Incorporation be obtained, having no desire to transfer our church property to the Methodist Preachers in Conference ; therefore, we have Resolved—

1. That we cannot fairly understand the intention of the said Preachers, in praying the Legislature for a special Act of Incorporation, and having some reason to fear that the above mentioned report is correct, we are much dissatisfied and do highly disapprove of the said memorial.

2. That in consequence of the dissatisfaction and doubt existing on our minds, relative to the intended special Act of Incorporation, and to the conduct of the Preachers in Conference requiring such an Act, we decline receiving any further services from them as respects our church government.

3. That George Collins, Tobias Hawkins and William Brown be a committee appointed to inform the presiding Elder of the District, or the ruling Elder in the city of New-York, of the above resolutions.

4. That we request William M. Stilwell to continue his services with us for the remainder of the year.

5. That we recommend the above to the members of our Society.

They also agreed to call a meeting of the whole Society, male and female, which they did on the next Wednesday night, the 26th inst. ; whereupon, a large number of the members crowded the Rose Street Academy and unanimously sanctioned the foregoing resolutions.

The Trustees being informed that they could not hold meetings in the Circus any longer, were now obliged to turn their attention towards going home and holding meetings within the walls of the new building, which were at this time a little more than half up and the floor beams laid, so that by laying down planks on the beams and making temporary seats, some hundreds might be accommodated. Thither we repaired on Sunday morning, July 30th, and William M. Stilwell preached within the new walls of Zion Church for the first time. It began to rain soon after the text was taken and continued during Divine service ; nevertheless there were but few went away ; those who had umbrellas stood it out with apparent composure. The weather cleared up time enough to hold

meeting in the afternoon, when Abraham Thompson preached and James Varick closed the meeting. We had a comfortable time; and John Dungy preached in the evening, commencing at half past 6 o'clock; so that the third meeting concluded before candle-light.

Thus the Trustees endeavoured to accommodate the Society and other attendants on Divine worship with us, and on week nights we continued to occupy the Rose Street Academy. While the Trustees were thus struggling under three difficulties, (which were the withdrawing from the white church, the efforts of Bishop Allen to take the advantage of our necessity, and the uneasiness of some of our members,) to keep matters together in the best way they could, they were informed that some of our Preachers were inclined to join Bishop Allen's connexion and had called a meeting to consult about it. This so early an apparent change in the minds of the Preachers, together with a notice they had received from Enoch George, Bishop of the white Methodist church, upon the case of our withdrawing from them, sickened the hearts of some (if not all) of the Trustees; but they took courage and went on, looking unto the great Head of the Church for his gracious aid.

The Preachers accordingly held their meeting at the residence of William Miller, in Mulberry Street, and, after some consultation, they resolved to request a meeting of all the official members of our Church.

The official members, therefore, came together in the

Rose Street Academy, on Friday night, August 11th, 1820, and the Preachers informed them that they had held a meeting for the purpose of considering the present state of our Church, and that there were two grand questions put and answered at that meeting, viz.—Shall we join Bishop Allen? Answer, No. Shall we return to the white people? Answer, No—and that they therefore determined to consult with the rest of their official brethren, upon the subject of establishing a firm church government of our own, by ordinations, &c. After several of the brethren had given their opinions, it being late, the meeting was adjourned to the following Tuesday night.

On Saturday morning, the 12th inst., Tobias Hawkins, William Brown and Thomas Jenkins, three of the Trustees, called upon Bishop George, at Morris Carter's, in Church Street, according to notice, where they held about two hours' conversation with the Bishop and some Elders of the white church; after which they parted with apparent friendship, the Bishop requesting only that the Trustees would grant Joshua Souls the privilege of explaining to our Society, the true state of the business in regard to the schism which had taken place in the white church, in order to clear the Preachers from some censure attached to them; which request the Trustees told him they would mention to the rest of their brethren, as they, being but three, were too small a number to decide upon it.

On Tuesday night, August 15th, the official members met according to adjournment, at William Brown's, in

Leonard Street. Abraham Thompson was appointed Chairman and Charles Anderson, Secretary; at which meeting William Miller was present, as the representative of the Asbury Church, and acknowledged his willingness to acquiesce with whatever the official members of Zion Church should determine upon for the spiritual government of the Church.

After considerable talk, they resolved that William Miller, Thomas Jenkins and Lowther Bruce be a committee appointed, to inquire of Bishop Hobart, of the Protestant Church in this city, whether he would assist to ordain one of our Deacons to the order of Elder. Some of the brethren (Abraham Thompson in particular,) were much displeased about requesting aid from a white Bishop in preference to Bishop Allen, who was yet in the city. The reason for so doing was mentioned, viz., that our brethren thought he had acted very unfriendly in coming to this city to establish a separate Society, while we were in union with him, which would tend to divide families and friends, and thereby cause very unpleasant feelings. It was then said that he was disposed to be friendly, and wished to have a meeting with some of our Trustees and Preachers; whereupon, they resolved that Tobias Hawkins, William Brown, Thomas Jenkins, George Collins and Charles Tredwell, five Trustees; also, Abraham Thompson, William Miller, Christopher Rush and James Varick, four Preachers, should be a committee appointed to sit with him, hoping that some amicable terms of reconciliation might be adopted.

On Thursday night, August 17th, the committee met with the Bishop, at William Brown's, in Leonard Street, and after some conversation with the old man, they found that the interview only served to let them know that he "*was not a child, that he knew his business,*" (as he said,) and that he had no intention to assist in ordination, except we put ourselves under his charge.

Thus we discovered that what was said of the Bishop's disposition to be friendly, and his desire to have an interview with some of our official brethren, must have flowed from selfish motives on his part, designed, very probably, to take the advantage of the unsettled state of the church affairs at this critical moment ; for, during this time, those Preachers who were attached to his connexion in this city, were going on to make proselytes of all they could, both of individuals and of churches, and with the influence of the aforesaid George White and other mismanagement, they obtained the consent of the African Church at Brooklyn to unite with them, and were proceeding onward.

On Sunday, August 20th, 1820, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered for the first time within the walls of the new Church, by William M. Stilwell.

On Friday night, September 1st, 1820, the official members met together in the Rose Street Academy, for the purpose of receiving the reports of those committees, which were appointed to make inquiry relative to ordination, and to have an interview with Bishop Allen—Abra-

ham Thompson, Chairman; Charles Anderson, Secretary. Abraham Thompson was requested to give in the report of the committee sent to Bishop Allen. He then stated that Bishop Allen refused to assist in ordaining Elders for our church, and that he could not do any thing for us in that respect, except we agree to put our church under the government of his Conference. Thus ended all further interview with him on that subject, and which, by the by, proved to be a sad disappointment to Father Thompson, who had been heretofore endeavouring to hold up the old man as a proper source for the organization of our church in preference to a white man.

William Miller reported, in behalf of the committee sent to Bishop Hobart, that he called on Rev. Thomas Lyel, the Presbyterian of Christ Church, in Ann (now Anthony) Street, who informed him that he thought there would be no difficulty in obtaining ordination, but that Bishop Hobart was out of town, and he promised to speak to him upon the subject when he returned to the city. William Miller further stated, that Rev. Thomas Lyel also informed him that William M. Stilwell would be a very suitable person for us to apply unto for ordination, he being the Presbyterian of the Methodist Church newly formed, and which he thought would be a much easier way to obtain the desired end.

Several of the official brethren, in the interval of our meetings, having had an interview with William M. Stilwell, in order to gain some information in regard to church government, and had got their minds fully satisfied that

ordination could be easily obtained from that source, they made known what information they had gathered on the subject, which seemed to afford much satisfaction to the brethren present, especially to Abraham Thompson, who appeared now to be more reconciled and stayed in his mind.

As matters now began to wear an aspect of regularity, uniformity and reconciliation, George Collins embraced the apparent favourable opportunity and mentioned to the brethren present, that he thought, from present appearances, it would be best to commence preparing for our organization, so that the business might be brought on in a regular and agreeable manner; whereupon, they resolved to appoint a committee of five persons, viz., James Varick, George Collins, Charles Anderson, Christopher Rush and William Miller, to form a Discipline for our Church, by a selection from the Discipline of our white brethren, that is, of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. After some conversation which took place, relative to the necessity of our Preachers exerting themselves to give the necessary assistance to such of our African brethren elsewhere, who may require it, and some observations in regard to the Brooklyn Church, the brethren retired with much more satisfaction than they had done from several former meetings.

The weather being very favourable the building progressed smartly, so that on Monday, September 4th, 1820, they commenced shingling the roof.

The committee appointed to form a Discipline, met on Monday evening, September 4th, at the residence of William Miller, in Mulberry Street, but did not do much. They determined on the title, viz., "The Doctrines and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in America;" they also resolved to call to their assistance John Duncy and Abraham Thompson, and to meet the following Wednesday night, at the same place. They hoped that Father Thompson would be better satisfied, by his being on the committee to form or select the Discipline, as he seemed to be yet somewhat wavering; and they also requested George Collins to draw up a preamble for the said Discipline.

At a regular monthly meeting of the Trustees, held at William Brown's, on Tuesday night, September 5th, they were found to be rather disunited. Some were inclined to unite with Richard Allen, and the others for establishing a church government of our own, and a letter was read, which was sent to them by Richard Allen, directed to William Brown, advising them to agree upon joining his connexion; but there was very little said about it notwithstanding.

The Discipline committee resumed their operation according to adjournment. They inspected the preamble, drawn up by George Collins, according to their request, and adopted it; they then proceeded to make the necessary selections for that purpose, and on Tuesday night, September 26th, 1820, they completed their selections and left the manuscript with George Collins, to be

arranged in a regular manner and prepared for the printer.

The case of our Church being at this time in a very precarious state, in regard particularly to the want of Elders in the Church, it became essentially necessary that something must be done to relieve her from that religious pressure; whereupon, a meeting of all the official members of the Church was held in the Rose Street Academy, on Wednesday night, September 13th, at which time the Elder, William M. Stilwell, informed the brethren that he called them together to consult about the propriety and necessity of electing an Elder, and read to them several extracts from books, written by Methodist Preachers, to prove the validity of such proceedings in cases of necessity. He also advised them to pursue or adopt the plan, as it would be a case of real necessity with them, being an African Methodist Church without an Elder, and he not having a sufficient number of Elders connected with him at present to perform ordination. A vote was then taken, in order to know whether the official brethren approved of the measure and were ready to act upon it; which was carried in favour of being ready. They then proceeded to nominate Abraham Thompson and James Varick, to be recommended to the Society as persons to be elected to the office of Elders in the Church,

Bishop William McKendree having arrived in the city, and being desirous to see some of the official members of our Church, nine of them, viz., Abraham Thompson,

Leven Smith, John Dungy, Christopher Rush, Timothy Eatto, Samuel Bird, Tobias Hawkins, William Brown, and George Collins called on him, on Sunday, September 24th, 1820, immediately after Divine service in the afternoon, at his lodgings (he being unwell) at the residence of Joshua Souls, where they had a mutual conversation on the subject of our withdrawing from our white brethren. The Bishop said that he desired to see them, in order to know what they wanted him to do for them. They told him what they wanted, what they had done, and how far they were willing to go, in order to be in union with or governed by the white Bishops and Conference, and asked him whether he could ordain Elders for them. He said that he was limited in his office and could not at the present, but advised them to wait until the sitting of the ensuing annual Conference, and have the case brought regularly before that body, so that, if they should agree on the subject, our Preachers might be ordained by him. Our brethren then informed him that such was the state of their spiritual affairs they could not wait until that time, but would be obliged to proceed and elect Elders as was contemplated, and gave him to understand that they probably would wait the result of the said Conference relative to ordination.

On Sunday afternoon, October 1st, 1820, being the time appointed to elect the two brethren who were nominated on the 13th of September last for that purpose, the members of the Society, both male and female, were requested to tarry after the dismissal of the congregation, for special business; and after the Elder, William M.

Stilwell, had given a satisfactory explanation of the purpose for which the members of the Society were detained, Abraham Thompson was offered, and all who were in favour of his being elected were requested to hold up their right hand, which was done in a very solemn manner by a large majority (if not by the whole body); then James Varick was offered, and was in the same manner solemnly elected. These two brethren, being thus elected, were considered as having full power to exercise the peculiar functions of Elders in the Church with us, or any society of coloured people in connexion with us, until an opportunity offered to ordain them by the hands of proper authority. The whole process was conducted with much apparent solemnity and satisfaction.

On Tuesday night, October 3d, the Trustees attended their regular monthly meeting, only one being absent, viz., Thomas Jenkins. All seemed calm and pleasant at this meeting. The building still progressed; the floor laid but the seats not fixed.

CHAPTER VI.

How Zion Church became the Mother Church of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in America, and her Rise and Progress.

The official members of Zion Church being now fully determined upon forming connexions with such of their coloured brethren, as were willing to unite with them in the formation of a uniform system of church government, came together on Wednesday night, October 25th, 1820, for the purpose of coming to a determination about the Discipline, and, after reading and examining the same, they adopted it and resolved to have it printed, and appointed George Collins and Christopher Rush, a committee, to attend to the publication thereof, and on the first November following, the manuscript was put in the hands of John C. Totten, printer, who was ordered to print twelve hundred copies.

About this time there were several places opened where our Preachers might have formed societies, or taken the charge of those already formed ; but they, being unaccustomed to the work of forming societies, and being not yet fully organized as a society, they were slow in their move-

ments, and some of them complained of the want of money as a hindrance to their travelling ; so that in consequence of their backwardness, some of these places were taken up by Richard Allen's Preachers, who were always on the alert to find out such places, and in some instances would not hesitate much to represent themselves to be the same as the Preachers of Zion Church, when they found it necessary to carry their point.

A small society at New-Haven sent to request a visit of one of our Preachers, in order to give them some information about our standing, and what we intended to do relative to forming connections with our coloured brethren, and Leven Smith, one of our ordained Deacons consented to go and see them on the subject ; who, upon his return, reported them willing to join the connexion, and that they requested some of our Disciplines to be sent to them as soon as they were printed. Abraham Thompson received from Philadelphia, a letter, written by the President of a committee of twelve persons, who superintended the business of a church, which they were building in that city, separate from Richard Allen's connexion, (the contents of which was written in answer to a letter sent to Richard Howel of that place, requesting information about the said church, which our brethren in New-York had heard of verbally) and after stating how they stood as a separate church at that time, they requested that one or two of our Preachers would come to Philadelphia about five weeks from the date of the letter, at which time they expected the house would be ready to be consecrated, and

that they might have a mutual consultation about joining the connexion.

The building still progressed, so that this day, the 2d of November, they began to fix up the seats. When it was understood that George White had been to Flushing, a village about eleven miles from the city of New-York, to induce the African Methodist Church in that place to unite with the Allenites, William Miller was anxious to go and see the brethren there in order to give them a true statement of the circumstance ; but he wished that one of the Preachers of Zion Church would go with him, and asked several of them to go at his expense, which they refused to do, having other engagements ; whereupon, George Collins offered to go with him, and was accepted. They accordingly went up to Flushing, and found the brethren much agitated and troubled about the report George White had made to them, viz., that all the members of Zion Church had concluded to join the Allenites, except two or three, whose minds would be made up in a few days. Miller and Collins gave them a true statement of the case, as far as they could, and the brethren appeared to be very glad of the visit, and concluded to continue as they were, until Zion Church got properly organized ; nevertheless, under the influence of the said George White, they were induced to unite with the Allenites.

November 2d, 1820, being the first Thursday of the month, the Leaders' meeting and quarterly Conference of Zion Church were held together, by the advice of the Elder in charge, at the residence of William Brown in

Leonard Street, and there were a large number of the official brethren at this meeting. The Secretary of the Leaders' meeting (George Collins) reported the amount of money received during the three years last past, ending the third of October last, viz., \$4654,62½, and \$3000 borrowed, making \$7654,62½; and the expenditures for the same time, \$7238,78, leaving a balance on hand of \$415,91½, which he said had been since paid to the builders. He also reported the amount of money paid to the builders, viz., cash, \$5542,78, and that the old house sold to the carpenter, and stone sold to the mason, together with some money which the builders said they had collected for the Church, he supposed would amount to about \$300, which would make \$5842,78.

After the business of the Leaders' meeting had ended, the business of the quarterly Conference was then taken up and attended to. During the meeting the Elder gave the Trustees \$10,37½, which he said was all he had received from Zion Church this year, and which he concluded to give to the church as his contribution, and informed the brethren that he had resolved that the money collected in future for him should be given to our Preachers, to assist them to travel. This was welcome news, for we did not know how we should raise some money to assist our Preachers, who were willing to visit places where they might preach and form Societies. At this meeting some conversation took place relative to the Asbury Church, which led to a proposal by one of the brethren to have some Articles of Agreement drawn up between the official members of both churches, for the better under-

standing of each party, and after some consultation on the subject, they resolved that George Collins should draw up the said Articles of Agreement, to be recommended to the official members of the Asbury Church for their approval. According to the resolution of the brethren, the Articles of Agreement were drawn up, a copy of which we here insert.

Whereas, the official members of the African Methodist Zion and Asbury Churches are desirous of becoming more united in their spiritual government and privileges, (the two churches being separately Incorporated, and consequently their temporal concerns being transacted by separate bodies of Trustees) they deem it necessary, in order to have a clear understanding between them, mutually to agree upon the following Articles: viz.

1. It is provided and declared between the parties, that the two bodies of Trustees shall not interfere with each other relative to the transactions of the temporal concerns of their respective churches.

2. It is provided and declared, that in every case when persons come forward to join on probation, or bring certificates of membership from other circuits or stations, the Elder having the charge of the aforesaid churches from time to time, shall inquire of each person in order to ascertain on which Church Register he wishes to have his name enrolled, and the said Elder shall proceed according to the determination of the applicant.

3. It is provided and declared, that no person shall at any time receive applicants on probation, or otherwise, to become members of either church ; but the aforesaid Elder for the time being, or any Elder, Deacon, or Preacher he may specially request to do so.

4. It is provided and declared, that sick and poor members of the one church shall have no claim on the poor's fund of the other, and that each church give relief only to her own sick and poor members, according to the state of her poor's fund and former custom.

5. It is provided and declared, that there shall be but one quarterly Conference to transact the spiritual concerns of both churches, and all business to be done at the quarterly Conference according to the Discipline of the connexion, and that the official members of both churches consequently have a seat and voice in the said Conference ; but that each church shall have separate Leaders' and Trustees' meetings, and attend to business agreeably to the rules of the aforesaid Discipline.

6. It is provided and declared that in all cases when houses are to be built, hired, or enjoyed gratis, for the purpose of Divine worship, wherein regular collections of money are to be made in any place within the limits of the Incorporation of each church, a fair representation of the same shall be made at the quarterly Conference, from time to time, by the party intending so to build, hire, or enjoy gratis for the aforesaid purpose, in order that there may be always a clear understanding between the two

bodies of Trustees relative to the revenue arising from such establishments.

7. It is provided and declared also, between the parties, that in all cases of difference between them which cannot be settled by the quarterly Conference, it shall be the duty of the Elder having the charge, to refer the case to the ensuing yearly Conference, where it shall be finally decided.

8. It is further provided that these Articles shall not be so construed as to affect any former agreement made by the Asbury Church and its stated Minister.

The foregoing Articles were agreed to, first, by the official members of the Asbury Church, and on the 30th of November, 1820, they were sanctioned by the official members of Zion Church.

Signed by WILLIAM M. STILWELL,
President, for both parties.

ABRAHAM MARKS,
Secretary for Asbury Church.

GEORGE COLLINS,
Secretary for Zion Church.

On Sunday, November 12th, 1820, being the second Sunday in the month and our Communion day, James Varick, one of our Elders elect, for the first time conse-

crated the elements for the Lord's Supper, and (together with Abraham Thompson, the other Elder elect) administered the same to the members of the Church, and Leven Smith, our ordained Deacon, assisted them. We had a comfortable time.

The official brethren of the society at New-Haven having resolved upon uniting with our connexion, they recommended to the brethren in New-York, an Exhorter, named Jeremiah Jacobs, for license to preach. Jeremiah Jacobs arrived in the city of New-York on Saturday, the 11th of November, intending to embark for Port Au Prince, with some adventures, hoping to return in a few months, and on Wednesday night, November 15th, according to request, he preached a trial sermon, was approved, and obtained license to preach.

According to the request of those brethren at Philadelphia, who were now forming a society in that city separate from the Allenites, and of those at New-Haven who were already formed under the charge of our white brethren, preparations were made by the official brethren of Zion Church in New-York to visit them, and on the first of December, Abraham Thompson and William Miller were sent to Philadelphia, and Christopher Rush to New-Haven, and upon their return they reported the willingness of the brethren at those places to unite with our connexion. Abraham Thompson having mentioned that while he was at Philadelphia, he had an interview with Ezekiel Cooper, an old member of the connexion of our white brethren, and friendly to our people, and that he

advised to have an address drawn up and sent to the Wesleyan Church at Philadelphia, for concurrence, in order to be presented to the white Methodist yearly Conference, which was to meet at that place the following spring, and then transferred to the New-York Conference, on the subject of ordination. Our brethren, the official members, considered the advice ; they approved the same ; and immediately appointed George Collins, John Dungy, James Varick, Charles Anderson and William Miller, a committee, to draft an address for that purpose, and on the 22d February, 1820, the committee commenced the operation. The address was drawn up, which reads as follows :

To the Bishops and Preachers of the Philadelphia and New-York Conferences, assembled :

RESPECTED BRETHREN,

We, the official members of the African Methodist Zion and Asbury Churches, in the city of New-York, and of the Wesleyan Church, in the city of Philadelphia, on behalf of our brethren, members of the aforesaid Churches ; likewise of a small society at New-Haven, and some of our coloured brethren on Long Island, beg the favour of addressing you on a subject, to us of great importance, and we presume not a matter of indifference to you.

In the first place, suffer us to beg you will accept of our humble and sincere thanks for your kind services to us when in our infant state, trusting that the Great Head of the Church, the all-wise and gracious God, has, and

will continue to reward you for your labours among us, having made you the instruments of bringing us from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan, to Him, the true and living God.

In the next place we proceed to say—When the Methodist Society in the United States was small, the Africans enjoyed comfortable privileges among their white brethren in the same meeting-house; but as the whites increased very fast the Africans were pressed back; therefore, it was thought essentially necessary for them to have meeting-houses of their own, in those places where they could obtain them, in order to have more room to invite their coloured brethren yet out of the ark of safety to come in; and it is well known that the Lord has greatly enlarged their number since that memorable time, by owning their endeavours in the conversion of many hundreds. Many Preachers have been raised up among them, who have been very useful in a located state; but they have hitherto been confined; they have had no opportunities to travel, being generally poor men, and having no provision made for them to go forth and dispense the Word of Life to their brethren, their usefulness has been greatly hindered, and their coloured brethren have been deprived of those blessings which Almighty God might have designed to grant through their instrumentality. And now, it seems, the time is come when something must be done for the prosperity of the ministry amongst our coloured brethren; and how shall this be accomplished? for we have not the least expectation that African or coloured Preachers will be admitted to a seat

and vote in the Conferences of their white brethren, let them be how much soever qualified for the work of the ministry; nor do we desire to unite with our brother **Richard Allen's** connexion, being dissatisfied with their general manner of proceedings; (for our brethren, the members of the Wesleyan Church, in Philadelphia, withdrew from them to build their present house of worship named as above,) therefore, our brethren in the city of New-York, after due consideration, have been led to conclude that to form an itinerant plan, and establish a Conference for **African Methodist Preachers**, under the patronage of the white Methodist Bishops and Conference, would be the means of accomplishing the desired end; believing that such an establishment would tend greatly to the prosperity of the spiritual concerns of our coloured brethren in general, and would be the means of great encouragement to our Preachers, who are now in regular standing in connexion with the white Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, and also to such as may be hereafter raised up among us, who may be disposed to join the said Conference and enter on the travelling plan. And in order to commence this great work, the two Societies in the city of New-York united and agreed that the title of the connexion shall be "**The African Methodist Episcopal Church in America,**" and have selected a form of Discipline from that of the mother (white) church, which, with a little alteration, we have adopted for the government of the said connexion, and to which we beg to refer you.

After the perusal of our selection and consideration of

our case, should our proceedings meet your approbation and you should be disposed to patronise the same, we will stand ready and shall be glad to receive such advice and instruction as you may think proper to give us, through our father in the Lord, Bishop McKendree, or any other person the Conference may be pleased to appoint. On the subject of ordination to Eldership, (a privilege which our Preachers have been long deprived of,) permit us to say we might have obtained it from other sources, but we preferred and determined to follow the advice of Bishop McKendree, given to our brethren in New-York the last time he was with them, and wait until the meeting of your annual Conference in this and the District of New-York, in order to understand what encouragement we may look for from the mother church. But in consequence of some uneasiness in the minds of some of our members in New-York, occasioned by our brother Richard Allen's determination to establish a society of his connexion in that city, our brethren there have been under the necessity of solemnly electing three of their Deacons to the office of Elders, and some of their Preachers to the office of Deacons, to act only in cases of necessity, and to show to our people that our Preachers can be authorized to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as well as those of brother Allen's connexion, that thereby they might keep the body together; and we believe it has had the desired effect, for very few have left the Societies there, notwithstanding the efforts made to induce them to leave us. We expect that our first yearly Conference will be held in the city of New-York, on the 14th day of June next, at which we hope to have the happiness of

hearing that our father in the Lord, Bishop McKendree, presided, and commenced his fatherly instructions in an African Methodist Conference, formed under the patronage of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. With this hope we shall rest, waiting your answer; meanwhile praying that the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls and our most merciful Father, will be pleased to bless and guide you in your deliberations on our case, so that your conclusions may be such as shall be pleasing in his sight, and tend most to the prosperity of his kingdom amongst the Africans, and consequently prove an everlasting blessing to many precious souls.

N. B. Should the above address be sanctioned by your respected body, and you should be pleased to act upon it, we will thank you to transmit the same to the New-York Annual Conference, for their consideration; and should the time appointed for the sitting of the African Conference be inconvenient for the person who may be appointed to organize the same, we are willing that it should be altered to a few days sooner or later, provided you would be pleased to give us timely notice of said alteration. But should you be disposed not to favour the said address in any respect, you will please have the goodness to return it to the bearer.

Signed in behalf of the official members of both Societies, at a meeting called specially for that purpose, March 23d, 1821, in the city of New-York.

JAMES VARICK, *President.*

GEORGE COLLINS, *Secretary.*

The foregoing being prepared and all ready, the brethren appointed Abraham Thompson and Leven Smith to take it to Philadelphia. It was presented to the official brethren of the Wesleyan Church, who approved the same and also signed it by the President and Secretary of their meeting, and was taken by Abraham Thompson to their Conference, which was held at Milford, in the state of Delaware. The Conference at Milford accepted the address, and having acted upon it, they transmitted the same to the New-York Conference, according to our request. We will insert a copy of their proceedings, which reads as follows :

The committee, to whom was referred the memorial of the official members of the African Methodist Zion and Asbury Churches, in the city of New-York, and the Wesley Church, in the city of Philadelphia, in behalf of themselves and others of their coloured brethren, proposing and requesting the organization of a Conference for the African Methodist Preachers, under the patronage of the Bishops and Conferences of the white Methodist Episcopal Church, having had the subject under serious and close consideration, in its various bearings and relations, ask leave now to report :

1. We view it as a subject of great importance to the coloured people, demanding from us our friendly patronage and pastoral attention, so far as circumstances will admit of it. We have always acted upon the principle toward the people of colour, of doing them all the good that was in our power, in promoting and improving their

moral and religious instruction and character, and in protecting and defending them in all their just rights and privileges, and more particularly we have, as instruments under God, laboured much for the conversion and salvation of their souls. They know, and it is generally known and acknowledged, that our labours of good will and christian love toward them for many years past, have been crowned with gracious success and much good effect among them, as it respects both their moral and religious character, and also to the improvement to some considerable degree, of their condition and circumstances in life.

2. There are at this time various societies and congregations of coloured people, in different places, who have been collected and raised under our ministerial labours, and who have erected and built themselves houses for the public worship of God, wherein they assemble separate from the white people for their religious devotions; and also, there are a considerable number of pious coloured men, whom we have reason to believe are qualified to preach the word of life and salvation, and to be useful in their labours among the people of their own colour; but upon our present plan, under existing circumstances and regulations, their privileges as ministers are very much circumscribed, and their opportunities for improvement and usefulness are very limited. There exists no expectation or prospect, that the coloured Preachers will be admitted to a vote or seat in our Conferences, or participate in sundry other privileges among the white Preachers, in their labours and pastoral care of the churches

and societies generally; neither is it understood that they wish or desire it. They request a Conference themselves in unity and friendship with, and under the patronage of the Bishops and Conferences of the white Preachers, and that our Bishops should preside among them and ordain their Preachers, and extend to them their superintending protection, counsel and direction in their itinerant regulations and ministerial operations. It appears that they could obtain orders from another quarter, and become a connexion distinct from, and independent of the white Bishops and Conferences, but they prefer and desire patronage from, and a certain degree of union with us. They have refused to unite with Richard Allen and his African connexion, being dissatisfied with their general manner of proceedings.

3. From every view of the subject we have been able to take, we are of opinion the time is come when something must be done, more than yet has been done, for our coloured people, especially for such as are situated and circumstanced as the memorialists are, in order to enlarge their sphere of labours, and to extend their privileges and opportunities of usefulness among themselves, under our protection and direction, otherwise we shall lose their confidence in us and our influence over them, and they will become separate from, and independent of us, and then our usefulness among them will in a great measure be lost. And it appears in the present case under consideration, that they are fixed and resolved to have a Conference among themselves, whether patronized by us or not, and they have appointed the time for holding

it, but that they wish us to take them under our patronage: Therefore, your committee proposes the following resolutions to the Conference for adoption, viz.

First, *Resolved*, that the Philadelphia Conference do advise and recommend that one of our Bishops do attend and preside in the African Conference, appointed to sit in New-York, and to superintend their organization as an African Methodist Conference, under the patronage of our Bishops and Conferences, agreeably to the proper plan, viz. (if the New-York Conference concur with us.)

1. One of the Bishops always to preside in the said Conference, or in case no Bishop be present, then, such white Elder as the Bishop shall appoint is to preside.

2. Our Bishops to ordain all their Deacons and Elders, such as shall be elected by their own Conference and approved of by the Bishop as qualified for the office.

3. The Bishop, or the Elder appointed by him, to preside in the Conference, with an advisory committee of three, chosen by the Conference, to make out the stations and appointments of the Preachers.

4. All the other proceedings of the Conference to be as conformable to the rules and regulations generally followed in our Conferences, as circumstances will admit of.

5. Their Discipline, doctrines, government, and rules

of order in all things, to be as conformable to ours as possible, so as to secure to themselves their own peculiar rights and privileges.

6. The Bishop, or such Elder as shall be appointed by him, with his proper instructions, together with the said African Conference, to agree upon the several points, terms and considerations of unity and amity mutually to exist, as reciprocal duties and obligations between them and us. This agreement to take place and be entered into at the time of organizing the said Conference.

Secondly, *Resolved*, that a copy of this report be forwarded with the African Memorial to the New-York Conference, and that the said New-York Conference be recommended and requested to concur with us in the proposed plan of organizing the said African Conference under our patronage, with such additions to, or alterations of the above items, as to them may appear best.

EZEKIEL COOPER,	} <i>Committee.</i>
THOMAS WARE,	
ALWARD WHITE,	

The above report was adopted by the Philadelphia Conference, and the Secretary was instructed to communicate a copy of it to the New-York Conference.

SAMUEL COX, *Secretary.*

Milford, April 19, 1821.

The foregoing report was approved of by the official

brethren, and they were encouraged to hope that their request would be granted, but they found their hope to be of short duration when they heard from the New-York Annual Conference, for that body, in their report, gave them to understand that they could do nothing for them, except they renounce the form of discipline which they had selected and adopted, and be willing to be governed by the old Discipline. We will also give a copy of their report, which reads as follows: viz.

The committee, to whom was referred the Memorial of the Africans in the city of New-York and other places, together with the accompanying documents, after due consideration, report as follows :

1. The committee conceive that humanity and religion combine to influence us to do all in our power for the instruction and salvation of coloured people. To have the pure word of life preached among them, and the discipline and ordinances of the Gospel faithfully administered, is of indispensable necessity, and requisite to their happiness and prosperity. It is believed that in these respects we have cause to charge ourselves with too little attention to their spiritual interest, and as though they were an inferior class of beings, they have too often been treated with unwarrantable neglect. It is to be feared that their loss of confidence in us, and the consequent measures which many of them have pursued, may, in a considerable degree, be traced to our neglect as the cause. But painful as this consideration is, we cannot approve of the course which our coloured brethren have taken in separating them-

selves from us, and forming themselves under a distinct title, as an independent body. This course is the more to be regretted, because it places them in a position which the constitution of our church cannot cover. Your committee conceive that the primary object contemplated in the memorial and accompanying documents, lies beyond the limits of the constitutional powers of an annual Conference. To organize a Conference *subject to the order* and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is the prerogative of the General Conference alone. An annual Conference, or Conferences, therefore, cannot organize even *such* a Conference, much less one acting under a distinct discipline and independent authority. In this view of the subject your committee are of opinion, that the African Conference, specified in the memorial, cannot be constitutionally organized or adopted; that it would not be advisable for our Bishops, or any one appointed by them, officially to preside at said Conference, or to ordain any Deacon or Elder elected by them. But, although we judge it inexpedient to prostrate the constitution and government of the church to accommodate any case whatever, firmly believing the evil would ultimately over-balance any good which might be supposed to result from it, we consider the condition of the Africans such as to demand every prudent exertion within our power to recover them from their wandering, and preserve them in the confidence and communion of the church. Your committee, therefore, recommend the adoption of the following Resolutions :

Resolved 1st, That if the African brethren, who have

addressed the Conference by memorial, will agree to be subject to the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in common with their white brethren, in such case, under the present existing circumstances, it is expedient and advisable that such coloured Preachers as are regularly constituted, be appointed to labour among them and take the pastoral charge of them until the next General Conference.

Resolved 2nd, That the coloured brethren submitting themselves to the order and discipline of the church, are entitled to the same rights and privileges with respect to the election and ordination of Local Deacons and Elders, as the white societies, the same form of order and discipline applying to both.

Resolved 3rd, That the organization of an African annual Conference, on the same principles, and subject to the same order and government as other Conferences, may be effected by the General Conference, but cannot be by one or more annual Conferences.

Resolved 4th, That it is advisable a member or members of this Conference, be appointed by the Bishop, to present the above Resolutions to the African brethren in New-York, together with any explanations and instructions which may be thought proper, and to receive their answer. Joshua Souls was appointed to present the foregoing report, and Thomas Mason accompanied him.

On the 12th of June, 1821, our official brethren met

together, for the purpose of considering the report of the New-York Annual Conference; which, being so contrary to that of the Philadelphia Conference, caused much dissatisfaction, and after deliberately considering the case, they resolved to proceed according to the ideas advanced by the Philadelphia Conference, viz., that one of the white Bishops preside at all our yearly Conferences, ordain all our Ministers and appoint them to their stations, according to our Discipline, and that we be willing to come on terms of unity and amity to that effect, if the next General Conference of the whites will receive us under their patronage; and George Collins and Charles Anderson were appointed to inform Joshua Souls of the above resolution. Our official brethren had an interview with Bishop Enoch George, and had some conversation relative to our intended yearly Conference; at which time he informed them that the other two Bishops were sick, and his engagements were such as to put it out of his power to attend the African Conference, and therefore he advised them to endeavour to do as well as they could in holding the aforesaid meeting.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the First and following Yearly Conferences.

On the 21st of June, 1821, being the day fixed upon by our Preachers for the first yearly Conference of our connexion, the Preachers, of both the Asbury and Zion Churches, came together in Zion Church, about half past two o'clock in the afternoon. Joshua Souls and Doctor William Phœbus, being invited to attend the meeting, they accepted the invitation and met with our brethren. They proceeded to elect one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church for their Superintendent, and the Bishop being not present, they chose Doctor William Phœbus for the President of the Conference, *pro ax viso*. They then proceeded to adopt some by-laws for the order of the Conference, and adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day.

The Preachers came together on the 22d, according to adjournment; Doctor William Phœbus presided, and Joshua Souls consented to be Secretary. On the 25th, the fifth day of the meeting, Freeborn Garretson also attended the meeting, and advised the brethren to proceed

and do as well as they could, until the next General Conference of the white Preachers, when he thought an African Conference would be established by that body, to be governed by the same rules with the whites. There were Preachers from New-Haven, Long Island and Philadelphia attended this Conference. On the 27th the Conference closed. Abraham Thompson was appointed to take the charge of Zion Church; William Miller, of the Asbury Church; Simon Murray, of the Wesleyan Church at Philadelphia; (he was first elected Deacon, and the necessity of the Society there requiring it, he was elected Elder, that he might take the charge of the church in that place,) and William Carman was elected Deacon for Long Island. James Varick was appointed District Chairman, a kind of Presiding Elder over the Preachers in New-York, Long Island and New-Haven; that is, to preside at all their quarterly Conferences. This is an office that is not known in our Discipline; but, under the present existing circumstances, it could not well be avoided.

The order of the names of the Preachers on the minutes, were as follows, viz. For New-York, Zion Church, Abraham Thompson, Leven Smith, Christopher Rush, John Dungy, (who afterwards left the connexion) Charles Anderson, James Smith, Timothy Eatto, Samuel Bird, and Peter Vanhas—James Varick, District Chairman—10. Asbury Church; William Miller, Abraham Marks, Christopher Atkerson, and John Palmer—4. New-Haven; James Anderson. Long Island; William Carman and Elijah Jackson—2. Philadelphia, Wesleyan Church;

Simon Murray and Edward Johnson, present, (Durham Stephens, Daniel Pernal, and Arthur Landford, were not at the Conference)—5. Total number, 22. The number of members returned: Zion Church, 763; Asbury Church, 150; New-Haven, 24; Long Island, 155; Wesleyan Church, 300; Easton, Penn., 18. Total, 1426. Amount collected for the Conference—\$27,30, in Zion Church; \$7,78, in Asbury Church,—whole amount, \$35,08. They agreed that the next yearly Conference should be in Philadelphia, on the 16th day of May, 1822.

It may not be amiss to state here, that about this time our new house was finished, and on Sunday, the 18th March, 1821, it was considered consecrated, although not in the usual form, because we had been holding meetings in it all the time from the time the floor was laid.

During the interval of the two African yearly Conferences, great anxiety existed in the minds of the official brethren, relative particularly to the case of ordination and being established as a connexion, for they found that while they were waiting for uncertainties in regard to what their white brethren would do, things were getting more and more out of order, so that about the 27th September, there were three different opinions existing among them; one class was for consulting to return under the government of the old connexion; another was for getting ordination from William M. Stilwell and his associates, as soon as possible, and be thereby established under the African Methodist Discipline; and a third was for continuing as they were and be content with electing

to orders until the next General Conference of the white brethren ; but were not able to come to any decision on either side. They received letters from various parts, written by our coloured brethren, advising and recommending, according to their ideas and judgment, how to proceed at this critical and very perplexing moment ; but these letters served mostly to increase perplexity of mind, being none of them to the point, and therefore could not render any satisfaction.

About this time, John Dungy left the city of New-York, and went to New-Haven, to reside. He had not been long there, before information was received in New-York, that he had applied for and received preaching license from the white Methodist Episcopal Church, and that he was endeavouring to persuade the society there, of coloured people, to submit themselves to that government, which caused some unpleasant feelings among them there, as the case relative to our government remained yet unsettled.

Among other perplexities and dissatisfaction in regard to the conduct of our coloured people, manifesting instability, we mention another, viz., that the Trustees of the Asbury Church, contrary to the expectation of the official members of Zion Church, had granted the use of their church to the Allenites, to hold their yearly Conference, which was to take place in June next.

On the 15th of May, 1822, Abraham Thompson, Christopher Rush, Leven Smith, William Carman, Timothy Eatto and Samuel Bird, embarked for the second African

Conference, to be held at Philadelphia. On their arrival there, they did not know what to do relative to holding the Conference, particularly as it respected who should be the President. The Bishops of the old connexion at this time in Philadelphia, said they could not attend on them officially, and Ezekiel Cooper, who was also in the city at this time, was so engaged as rendered it out of his power to attend ; therefore, on the 16th of May, the appointed day for the Conference, they concluded to appoint Abraham Thompson, President.

They found the Trustees of the Wesleyan Church, divided in their opinion, relative to the government of the church, and had much trouble in trying to get them reconciled. Bishops Roberts and George, called on them during the time of the Conference, in order to advise them to wait until the meeting of their General Conference, and see what they would do towards organizing our church according to the views of the New-York annual Conference of our white brethren the last year, and urged their advice by mentioning that as the door of the old connexion would be shut against the Stilwellites, so it would be shut against our people also, if they should conclude to get their ordination from that source.

During the sitting of this Conference the official members of the Wesleyan Church came to a resolution, declaring in what manner they would be satisfied to continue in union with Zion Church, viz. ; that if the government of the connexion is established according to the Discipline we selected, they would continue in the union ;

but if Zion Church returned under the government of the whites, they would not go with her, and therefore would no longer be in connexion with her.

At this time the dissatisfaction which took place in consequence of the proceedings of the Trustees of the Asbury Church, in New-York, had gone to some length, inasmuch that the members of that church were called together, in order to consult about their joining the Allenites, and an official letter was sent by them to the Conference at Philadelphia, informing that they had concluded to act in a kind of independent manner, and should allow whom they pleased to preach for them. However, James Varick was appointed to take the charge of them, provided they would receive him.

On the arrival of the brethren from Philadelphia, a meeting of the official members of the connexion in New-York was called on the 30th of May, 1822, to consult about what was best to be done in order to be established some way or other. At this meeting an official letter from the Wesleyan Church was read, in which an immediate establishment by ordination was advised, and the mode suggested, viz., to let three of our Deacons ordain an Elder, or to call the assistance of an Elder from some other church, who, with two of our ordained Deacons might ordain an Elder, and so be established under the discipline we selected for the connexion. They further stated that they would have no more to do with petitioning the white Conferences, and that they wished not to receive ordina-

tion from William M. Stilwell, fearing it might be an injury to them at Philadelphia.

As there was no particular resolution entered into at the yearly Conference, on the case of ordination, it was thought best, at this meeting, to take up this case ; and Leven Smith having informed the brethren that he understood that Bishop McKendree (who was at this time in New-York) had spoken favourably respecting our situation, a committee of five persons, viz., Abraham Thompson, Christopher Rush, Leven Smith, James Varick and James Smith was appointed, to call on the Bishop, in order to learn more correctly, whether it would be in his power to perform ordination for us during his stay in the city. His answer was that he could not do any thing contrary to the wish of his white brethren, and wished that a written instrument might be presented to him, stating the desire of the African Society. In order to meet the views of the Bishop, the committee, which was appointed to call on him, was continued, and authorized to draw up an instrument of writing to present to him, stating pointedly what was the immediate desire of our brethren, and George Collins, who was anxious to forward the work of so great importance at this time, drew up, for the committee, a few items, which were as follows : viz.

We, the committee, appointed by the official members of the African Methodist Zion Church, in the city of New-York, to obtain information of the best method for ordaining the Preachers of that church, under existing circumstances, are instructed to state as follows :

1st, That the said church in New-York, several societies on Long Island, a society at New-Haven, the Wesleyan church at Philadelphia, and several societies in the States of Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, have resolved to be established in a connexion, according to the rules and regulations of the Discipline, selected and printed in New-York, for an African Methodist connexion.

2d, That the aforesaid societies wish to be in perfect union with the mother church, as respects brotherly and friendly affections or ties, so that the one may not be in opposition to the other, in their religious course or travels.

3d, That they think the foregoing may be happily accomplished, if one of the Bishops of the mother church could be allowed to preside at the yearly Conferences of the African Methodist connexion, from time to time ; and in case of his absence, the Superintendent, contemplated by the aforesaid Discipline, to be appointed at a yearly African Conference, shall have full power to preside and perform the duties of a Bishop, so far as it may become essentially necessary for the prosperity of the aforesaid connexion, and without any opposition to the interest of the mother church.

4th, That in order for the accomplishment of the third item, regulations can be reciprocally adopted, to secure to the Bishop of the mother church the prerogative of superintendency at the African Conferences, whenever it may be in his power to attend said Conferences, from

time to time ; also, to secure to him a compensation for his extra service and expense attending the same, and also for the time and place of meeting the aforesaid Conferences, in order to suit the conveniency of said Bishop, and not too laborious or expensive for the African Preacher's attendance.

5th, That the members, particularly of Zion Church, are sorry to see and hear of so much division among the people called Methodist, and especially the divisions and sub-divisions among their African brethren of this name. They believe that unhappy divisions among their African brethren will continue to exist, unless there is another permanent African Methodist connexion formed, besides that of our brother Richard Allen's. They have great reason to expect that an establishment, in the foregoing manner, would be the most likely means of uniting all their African Methodist brethren into one solid body in time, and so prevent the unhappy feeling now existing between families, friends and brethren.

6th, That if the foregoing items are thought to be impracticable by the Bishops and Conferences of the mother church, we shall be under the necessity of procuring the means of ordination otherwise, in the best possible manner ; but without the least intention of opposition to the interest of our white brethren, as the unity of the aforesaid societies depend on our obtaining ordination for our Preachers this summer, if possible, and thereby become established, according to our selected Discipline, which

these societies have approved and determined to be governed by.

The foregoing items were approved by the aforementioned committee, and by the official members of Zion Church, and the instrument of writing was handed to Bishop McKendree, according to his request.

On the 6th of June, 1822, Abraham Thompson, Christopher Rush and James Smith, three of the committee, called on Bishops George and Roberts, (McKendree being gone out of town) and received an answer from them, relative to the instrument of writing which was presented to Bishop McKendree; which was, that they could not do any thing for us if it were to save their lives and ours, unless we submitted to their government as heretofore; and they, at the same time, informed the committee, that William Miller and some more of the officers of the Asbury Church, had given the charge of the said church unto them as heretofore, and had agreed to give one hundred dollars a year for the service of a white Elder. So much for delaying and waiting for Bishops and Conferences.

On the evening of the same day, (6th of June) the official members held a meeting to hear the result of the few items sent to Bishop McKendree; and being informed that nothing would be done by the Bishops and Conference of the old connexion, or mother church, they again continued the same committee, and authorized them to

seek for information of the best manner of obtaining ordination elsewhere.

The committee, thus authorized, promptly went forward, and shortly after obtained the consent of Doctor James Covell, Silvester Hutchinson and William M. Stilwell, all regularly ordained Elders of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and members of the Methodist church lately established in this city, (having recently withdrawn from the old connexion, for reasons mentioned in the foregoing part of this work,) and on Monday night, June 17th, 1822, they attended the appointed meeting in Zion Church, and after an appropriate and solemn sermon, delivered by Doctor Covell, they ordained Abraham Thompson, James Varick and Leven Smith, Elders in the church of God, in the presence of a large and respectable audience. Thus, after twenty-one months struggling through a kind of spiritual wilderness, Zion Church obtained three ordained Elders.

At this time, the Asbury Church had returned to the old connexion, and during the time of the yearly Conference of the Allenites, William Miller had allowed their Preachers to preach in his church; therefore, being thus separated from Zion Church, he deprived himself of the privilege of ordination.

In consequence of the unfinished state of the second yearly Conference, held at Philadelphia, it became necessary to have an extra meeting or convention of the

Preachers, in order to carry out or finish the business of that meeting, and the brethren, therefore, fixed upon the 18th of July for that purpose. Accordingly, on Thursday, July 18th, 1822, the extra meeting commenced in the city of New-York.

At this meeting, on Sunday morning, there were six Deacons ordained, viz., Christopher Rush, James Smith, James Anderson, William Carman, Edward Johnson and Tilman Cornish, and in the afternoon the same persons were ordained Elders. This was done in consequence of the necessity of Elders to take the charge of a number of societies already formed, and others who were willing to be formed into circuits, in connexion with Zion Church. There were twelve Preachers attended this meeting : eight of New-York, two from Philadelphia, one from New-Haven, and one from Long Island. James Varick was elected Superintendent of the connexion, according to the Discipline. Abraham Thompson was appointed to take the charge of Zion Church; Christopher Rush, to take charge of the Newark Society, and others on the Jersey side who might be willing to accept of his services; Leven Smith was appointed as a Missionary, to go on as far as Boston; James Smith, to assist William Carman on Long Island; Edward Johnson, to take charge of the Wesleyan Church at Philadelphia; and James Anderson, left at New-Haven.

In consequence of the faithful exertions of Christopher Rush, an Incorporation was obtained for the Society at

Newark, and on Monday, April 7th, 1823, the corner stone of a Meeting-house was laid, at that place, and arrangements made to build a house of worship, forty feet long and thirty feet wide.

On Wednesday, the 21st of May, 1823, the Third Yearly Conference commenced in the city of New-York. The Preachers that attended were, James Varick, Superintendent; Abraham Thompson, Christopher Rush, Ja's Smith, Samuel Bird, Timothy Eatto, Peter Vanhas, William Carman, George Tredwell and James Anderson.

In consequence of a dissatisfaction amongst the official members of the Wesleyan Church, in Philadelphia, which took place soon after the extra Conference, none of their Preachers attended this third Conference. They had an agreeable time, and the Conference closed the following Monday. George Tredwell, a young Preacher from Long Island, was received at the meeting, on trial. Samuel Bird, Timothy Eatto and Peter Vanhas were ordained Deacons. Leven Smith was appointed to the charge of the society in New-York, but was allowed to go on to Providence and other places eastward, if he thought proper, for a few months, and in that case James Smith was to fill his place until his return. James Anderson was continued at New-Haven, embracing a small society of twenty-one members at Middletown, which he reported having been joined together within the last year. William Carman was continued on Long Island, and Chris-

topher Rush on the Jersey side. Abraham Thompson was considered a superannuated Preacher.

About this time, William Miller, of the Asbury Church in the city of New-York, at length shewed himself openly, by going to Philadelphia; joining the Allenites there; was ordained an Elder by them, and received an appointment to the charge of a society at Washington, in connexion with the Allenites; and, to complete the transaction, the said Asbury Church shortly afterwards put themselves under the government of that connexion, and thus changed their church government twice in the course of twelve months.

In consequence of the dissatisfied state of mind of a number of the official brethren, and their sending an address to the General Conference of the white brethren, our yearly Conference, which was to take place on the 20th of May, was postponed until the 15th of July, in order to understand what the said General Conference would resolve upon for the benefit of their coloured brethren; and when our brethren found that nothing was done that would be of any advantage to our people, they held their Fourth Yearly Conference, on the 15th of July, 1824, according to postponement. James Smith was appointed to the charge of Zion Church, in New-York; Leven Smith, to Newark; William Carman was continued on Long Island; James Anderson, to Middletown; and Christopher Rush was appointed a Missionary. The society at New-Haven, being dissatisfied, because the Elder

had excluded from them a man who had been guilty of a gross crime, and whom they thought ought not to be expelled, because he was the only man of usefulness among them, were left to determine whether they would consent to be governed by the Rules of Discipline, and be continued in the connexion.

May 19th, 1825, the Fifth Yearly Conference took place in Zion Church, in New-York. There were no Preachers attended this meeting, but those who belonged to the city of New-York, and there was no extra Preaching, as is usual in the time of Yearly Conference; therefore, they had a very flat time. Christopher Rush was appointed to the charge of Zion Church, in New-York; Peter Vanhas, to be ordained Elder, to take the charge of the society at Harlæm; and Abraham Thompson consented to take the charge of Newark and Elizabethtown.

May 18th, 1826, the Sixth Yearly Conference took place in Zion Church, New-York. The Preachers that attended this meeting were, James Varick, Superintendent, Christopher Rush, Leven Smith, Peter Vanhas, Timothy Eatto, Abraham Thompson, Charles Anderson, William Carman and George Tredwell. They had an agreeable time. Charles Anderson and George Tredwell were ordained Deacons, and Timothy Eatto ordained Elder. James Varick was re-appointed Superintendent; Christopher Rush appointed to New-York; William Carman and George Tredwell, to Long Island circuit; Tim-

othy Eatto and Charles Anderson, to Jersey circuit; and Peter Vanhas, to Harlæm.

May 17, 1827, the Seventh Yearly Conference took place in Zion Church, in the city of New-York. Joseph Preston Hopkins, from Buffalo; James Anderson, from New-Haven; William Carman and George Tredwell, from Long Island, attended, together with all the Preachers attached to the city of New-York. The appointments were left the same as last year, except two, viz., Peter Vanhas was appointed for Newark, and Timothy Eatto for Harlæm.

This year, Jacob Matthews, who became a Preacher while he was a member of Zion Church, and had a few years past withdrawn from Zion and joined the Asbury Church, and had afterwards attached himself to the Allenites, previous to their having a church in this city, made application to return to the bosom of Zion Church again, and was, on the 15th of August, 1827, received to membership as Elder.

May the 15th, 1828, the Eighth Yearly Conference took place in New-York. James Anderson, from New-Haven, and George Tredwell, from Long Island, attended, together with the Preachers of the city of New-York. Christopher Rush was elected Superintendent of the connexion, and Jacob Matthews was appointed to the church in New-York.

On the 21st of April, 1829, Christopher Rush, the Su-

perintendent, read to the official members a letter, received from the official members of the Wesleyan Church, in Philadelphia, informing that they had resolved to become united to our connexion, and had appointed Delegates to attend the next yearly Conference, to communicate their determination personally.

May 21st, 1829, the Ninth Yearly Conference took place in New-York. The names of the Preachers who attended this meeting were, Christopher Rush, Superintendent, Leven Smith, James Smith, Peter Vanhas, Timothy Eatto, and Jacob Matthews, of New-York; William Carman and George Tredwell, from Long Island; Charles Anderson, from Newark; Edward Johnson, Richard Phillips, David Stevens, and David Crosby, delegates from the Wesleyan Church, in Philadelphia; David Smith, from Fredericksburgh, and Jacob Richardson, from Harrisburgh, Western country, state of Pennsylvania. By reason of sickness, James Anderson, of New-Haven, did not attend personally, but wrote to the Conference representing those under his charge.

On the 28th of May, two days after the Conference raised, a Preacher, named Hamilton Johnson, arrived here from Prescott, Upper Canada, hoping to be in time to join the Conference, and represent a society in that part of the country.

The appointments were as follows, viz., Jacob Matthews, to Zion Church; Charles Anderson, to Middle-

town and New-Haven ; George Tredwell, for Long Island ; Peter Vanhas, to Newark, and Timothy Eatto, to Harlæm. The appointments of the Preachers from Philadelphia and westward, were not made out at this Conference, as it was found necessary to set off another Conference, to be held in Philadelphia, on the 13th of June, 1829. Charles Anderson and George Tredwell were ordained Elders, on Monday night, May 25th, 1829.— James Anderson, being in an ill state of health, located ; James Smith also located this year ; and Leven Smith was appointed occasional Missionary.

The aforesaid set-off Conference met in Philadelphia according to appointment, on the 13th June, 1829, and the Preachers who attended were Christopher Rush, Superintendent ; Jacob Matthews and Timothy Eatto, from New-York ; Edward Johnson, Durham Stevens, David Stevens, George Stevenson, David Crosby, Jonathan Gibbs, Arthur Langford, Tower Hill, John Marshall, Richard Philips and David Smith, of the Wesleyan Church, Philadelphia ; Jacob Richardson, Samuel Johnson and Abraham Green, from the Western District of Pennsylvania. Edward Johnson was appointed to the charge of the Wesleyan Church ; Jacob Richardson to the charge of the Western District ; David Smith and Richard Philips were appointed Missionaries.

The Preachers of the old connexion of our white brethren, manifested a very friendly disposition towards us, so that Jacob Matthews, the Elder in charge of Zion Church,

easily effected arrangements with them to fill appointments for him in Zion Church, once in two weeks, commencing on the 13th of September, 1829, and at their annual Conference, held in this city, our Pulpit was offered to them, which they readily accepted, and preached for us during the sitting of their Conference, which commenced on the 6th of May, 1830.

May 17, 1830, the Tenth yearly Conference commenced in the city of New-York. Those who attended were, from Philadelphia, Edward Johnson and David Stevens ; from Fredericksburgh, David Smith ; from Connecticut, Charles Anderson and Jehiel C. Beman ; of New-York, Christopher Rush, Superintendent, Leven Smith, Jacob Matthews, Peter Vanhas and Timothy Eatto ; none from Long Island. Jehiel C. Beman, being recommended to the Conference by the church at Middletown, was ordained Deacon and Elder, the two first days of the sitting of the Conference, to serve the church in that place, and he, having left his wife very ill at home, was under the necessity of returning immediately.

William Miller, having returned from Washington, where he had charge of a society of Allenites, and having somewhat repented of the error of straying from his African mother church, made application to join our connexion again, with the society under his charge, viz., the Asbury Church, and was received by the Conference.

The appointments were, for New-York, Timothy Eatto, for both Zion and Asbury Churches; for Harlæm and vicinity, Leven Smith; for Newark, Charles Anderson; for Connecticut, Jehiel C. Beman, and for Long Island. George Tredwell. The Philadelphia Conference took place on the 12th of June, 1830.

The arrangements with the Preachers of the old connexion of our white brethren, for filling appointments in Zion Church, once in two weeks, continued, being renewed by our Elder, Timothy Eatto. Henry Draton joined the connexion this year.

May 21st, 1831, the Eleventh Yearly Conference took place in this city. The names of the Preachers were, Christopher Rush, Superintendent; Jacob Matthews, Leven Smith, William Miller, Timothy Eatto, George Tredwell, Jehiel C. Beman, Henry Draton, Charles A. Boyd, Charles H. Anderson, and George Garnett. Total number of members reported this year, 1016. The Yearly Conference, at Philadelphia, met on the 11th of June, 1831. Fourteen Preachers and 673 members reported this year.

May 19th, 1832, the Twelfth Yearly Conference took place in this city. Preachers present, Christopher Rush, Superintendent; William Miller, Jacob Matthews, Leven Smith, Charles Anderson, Timothy Eatto, Charles A. Boyd, Henry Johnson, William H. Bishop, Jehiel C. Beman, Hosea Easton, James Simmons, Peter Vanhas,

Henry Draton, David Blake, Adam Ford, Daniel Vandevier, Francis P. Graham, John Lewis, and George Garnett.

May 18th, 1833, the Thirteenth Yearly Conference took place in the city of New-York. The persons who attended were as follows, viz.

Elders—Christopher Rush, Superintendent; William Miller, Jacob Matthews, Peter Vanhas, Leven Smith, Henry Draton, Timothy Eatto, Henry Johnson, George Tredwell, Jehiel C. Beman, and William Carman—11.

Deacons—James Simmons, William H. Bishop, John W. Lewis, Hosea Easton, George Garnett, John W Robinson, and George Matthews—7.

Preachers—Adam Ford, David Blake, Daniel Vandevier, William Fuller, and John Williams—5. Total, 23. John W Robinson, George Matthews, John Williams, and John Tappen, were received on trial.



Having given, in the best manner we could, a short sketch of the Rise and Progress of our Zion Church, and of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in America, down to this date, we are under the necessity of closing our scanty narration, in consequence of the want of mat-

ter and opportunity to fill out the vacancy down to the present time. It is possible that the continuation of the Treatise may be taken up at some future time and carried out, by some person who may be able to gather and prepare matter for that purpose.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of our Churches in Connexion at the present date.

It is presumed that it would be a satisfaction to many of our brethren and friends, to know the number of Churches or Meeting-houses we have, since our organization as a regular Evangelical Church in 1820; and, therefore, we proceed to give the information, commencing with the

STATE OF NEW-YORK.

City of New-York—Zion and Asbury Churches, 2. Westward—Rochester, 1; Ithaca, 1; Bath, 1; Binghamp, 1; Lockport, 1; Syracuse, 1; Buffalo, 1 in progress: Troy, 1; Poughkeepsie, 1; Newburgh, 1; New-Rochelle, 1; Whiteplains, 1; Harlæm, 1 in progress. Long Island,—Sagharbour, 1; Lakeville, 1; Flushing, 1; Brooklyn, 1.

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Boston, 1; Salem, 1; Nantucket, 1.

STATE OF RHODE-ISLAND.

Providence, 1

STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

Hartford, 1 ; Middletown, 1 ; Hew-Haven, 1 ; Bridgeport, 1.

STATE OF NEW-JERSEY.

Newark, 1 ; Elizabethtown, 1 ; Shrewsbury, 1.

STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Philadelphia, 2 ; Harrisburg, 1 ; York, 1 ; Carlisle, 1 ; Shippinsburgh, 1 ; Gettysburgh, 1 ; Chambersburgh, 1 in progress ; Lewistown, 1 ; Bellefonte, 1 ; Williamsport, 1 ; Johnstown, 1 ; Pittsburgh, 2.

STATE OF DELAWARE.

Wilmington, 1.

STATE OF MARYLAND.

Baltimore, 2.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

City of Washington, 1. Total, 45.

A

VIEW OF THE SUBJECT

OF

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

A
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CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

We now proceed, according to promise in the Preface, to give a view of our thoughts and knowledge of Church Government, as an Episcopál Church ; showing, for the information and satisfaction of the ministers and members of our connection especially, and the public in general, that our present mode of Church Government, as an Episcopal Church, is established upon as good a basis as any other church, according to the custom of ancient Christians, and the expressions in Scripture of some of the Apostles of our Lord. And in order to be understood by the reader, we will endeavour to do it in as plain a manner as we can, and proceed after the following order, viz,

1. The Bishop, or Superintendent, and his powers or authority in the Church.

2. The Elder and his duty, and

3. The Deacon and his duty.

In order to take up the first proposition, we shall begin with the word Episcopacy, or Episcopal, appertaining to the Bishopric. As we, from our commencement, took this Title, we have been judged, by some unfriendly persons, to claim a name that did not belong to us, according to our present mode of government by a Superintendent elected, and not particularly or especially ordained for a Bishop; and with this view, those persons endeavour to invalidate our connexion, as having no Bishop, and therefore have no right to the name of Episcopal, and in consequence of this unfriendly practice, many of our brethren have been much annoyed, being not able to confute them by contrary information. In order to meet this objection, and stop the mouths of these gainsayers, it will be necessary to inquire into the origin of a Bishop, and thereby find out from whence the term Episcopal arose.

We proceed then to say, that Buck's Theological Dic-

tionary informs us that the word Bishop comes from the Saxons, and that they derived it from the Greeks, and that these people used it as a title for the chief clerk of the market, who inspects all that is bought and sold therein. James Wood brings it from the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and agrees with the above information; and when the title was brought into the Church, Lord King shows that the man who bore it, was only a Priest, a Presbyter, or Elder; and examining the New Testament, we find nothing therein which makes him any thing more, as to ordination, than an Elder. How then does he become a Bishop, or Superintendent, as he is called among us? He is virtually elected by the church. How does the church elect him? They have granted this power to the Yearly Conference, according to our Discipline, which consists of a body of itinerant ministers, and by them he is actually elected for a certain term of years, by ballot, and at the expiration of that term he is re-elected, or another person elected in his stead, if the Yearly Conference think proper, at one of those meetings which the Discipline designates for making new rules and regulations.

In confirmation of the foregoing, relative to the origin of the word Bishop, and to there being originally but two orders in the church, see Buck's and Wood's Theological

Dictionaries; also, Lord King's account of the same, and Scripture references: see St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, 1st chap. and 1st verse—1 Peter, 5th chap. and 1st verse—the Acts of the Apostles, 20th chap. 17th and 28th verses—Titus, 1st chap. 5th and 7th verses—1 Timothy, 3d chap. 1st and 8th verses—making but two orders of ministers in the primitive church: and as the Rev. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, was a regular ordained priest of the Protestant Church of England, we see no difficulty nor impropriety in claiming the name of Episcopal; although the venerable Wesley refused to do so for himself, because he would not interfere with the established order of the church of which he was a member; but he submitted to the term Superintendent, which we are satisfied to claim; and with these views we follow John Wesley's mode of government, with some slight alterations, in consequence of being under a Republican government.

We shall now proceed to give some extracts from the writings of Lord King, who has given us a view of church government, from the days of the Apostles, down for three hundred succeeding years, so that we may be informed how Bishops were made by the ancient churches.

We have said, relative to our own method, that a Bishop was virtually elected by the church and actually by the Yearly Conference; and now see Lord King: “When the Bishop of a church was dead, all the people of that church met together in one place to elect a new Bishop—so Sabinus was elected Bishop of Emerita, by the suffrage of all the brotherhood, which was also the custom throughout all Africa, for the Bishop to be chosen in the presence of the people, and so Fabianus was chosen to be Bishop of Rome by all the brethren, who were met together in one place to that very end.” 37th page and 7th verse.

And now a reference to our Discipline, as having given to the Yearly Conference, by the whole church, the power of election, will satisfy us on this head; and what is now to the point, this Bishop, so elected by the church, being but an Elder or Priest, is evidently called an Episcopalian. But that all concerned may be satisfied, we give an extract in the author’s own words, as follows:

“Now the manner of electing a Bishop I find to be thus: When a Parish or Bishopric was vacant, through

the death of the incumbent, all the members of that Parish, both of the clergy and laity, met together in the church, commonly to choose a fit person for his successor, to whom they might commit the care and government of their church. Thus, when Alexander was chosen Bishop of Jerusalem, it was by the compulsion or choice of the members of that church. And as to the Bishopric of Rome, we have a memorable instance of this kind in the advancement of Fabianus to that See.

“Upon the death of Bishop Anterus, all the people met together in the church to choose a successor, proposing several illustrious and eminent personages as fit for that office, whilst no one so much as thought upon Fabianus, then present, till a dove miraculously sat upon his head, in the same manner as did the Holy Ghost formally descend on our Saviour; and then all the people, guided as it were with one Divine spirit, cried out with one mind and soul that Fabianus was worthy of the Bishopric, and straight way taking him, they placed him on the Episcopal throne. And as was Fabianus, so likewise his successor Cornelious was elected by the suffrage of the clergy and the laity.” See Lord King, pages 55 and 56, and 3d verse.

The titles given to this supreme personage by Cyprian, is Bishop, President, Pastor, Governor, or Superintendent. And having given the origin of the Bishop, we shall now proceed to speak something of his duty in a very brief manner, and for this purpose we shall make another extract from the writings of Lord King, in his own words :

“The Bishop’s flock having been so largely discussed, it will now be necessary to speak something of the Bishop’s duty towards them, and the several particulars of his honourable office. I shall not be tedious, since about this there is no great difference, only briefly enumerate the several actions belonging to his charge. In brief, therefore, the particular acts of his function were such as these, viz., preaching the word, praying with his people, administering the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, taking care of the poor, ordaining of ministers, governing his flock, excommunicating of offenders, absolving penitents, and, in a word, whatever acts can be comprised under those three general heads of preaching, worship, and government, were part of the Bishop’s function and office.” See Lord King, page 53 and 1st verse.

Having thus given our views of primitive Bishops from the first three hundred years succeeding the Apostles, we will here briefly show the difference between their manner of government and ours.

The primitive church formed no connection of several societies as we do, for every Pastor of a congregation was a Bishop and had the control of his own society ; but with us it is essentially necessary to form a connexion of our several societies, and they being located in different parts of the United States, it becomes needful to have one central point where our ministers may have interview from time to time ; hence our Yearly Conference is formed for that purpose, and, therefore, our Bishop or Superintendent must travel and oversee the whole, that every branch of our church may harmonize.

The next to be noticed is an Elder and his duty ; but, as we find him so nearly like our present mode, we judge it needless to say much on that point, only that he was the same in order, or ordination, but not in degree with a Bishop, because he is not so advanced to that office by

the suffrage of the church. We will, therefore, only transcribe one verse from Lord King :

“The Presbyters ruled in those churches to which they belonged; else this exhortation of Polycarpus to the Presbyters of Philippi would have been in vain : let the Presbyters be tender and merciful, compassionate toward all, reducing those that are in errors, visiting those that are weak, not negligent of the widow and orphan and him that is poor ; but ever providing what is honest in the sight of God and men, abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unrighteous judgment, being far from covetousness, not hastily believing a report against any man, not rigid in judgment knowing that we are all faulty and obnoxious to judgment.” See Lord King, 4th chap. and 4th verse.

Having thus spoken of Elders, we next proceed to speak of Deacons and their duties, and in doing this, we shall only make an extract from our author, as follows :

“Next to the Presbyters were the Deacons, concerning

whose office and order I shall say very little, since there is no great controversy about it, and had it not been to have rendered this discourse complete and entire, I should in silence passed it over. Briefly, therefore, their original institution, as in Acts, 6th chapter and 2d verse, was to serve tables, which included these two things—a looking after the poor and an attendance at the Lord's table. As for care of the poor, Origen tells us that the Deacons dispensed to them the church's money, being employed under the Bishops to inspect and relieve all the indigent within their diocese. As for their attendance at the Lord's table, their office with respect to that consisted in preparing the bread and wine, in cleansing the sacramental cups and other such like things; whence they are called by Ignatious, Deacons of meats and cups; assisting, also, in some places at least, the Bishops or Presbyters in the celebration of the Eucharist, delivering the elements to the communicants; they also preached, &c., and in the absence of the Bishops and Presbyters, baptized. In a word, according to the signification of their name, they were, as Ignatious calls them, the church's servants, set apart on purpose to serve God and attend to their business, being constituted, as Eusebius terms it, for the service of the public." See Lord King, page 82, 5th chap. and 1st verse; also, page 84, 5th chap. and part of the 3d verse.

“ The Bishops in those days not usually arriving *per saltum* to that dignity and honour, but commonly beginning with the most inferior office, and so gradually proceeding through the others till they came to the supreme office of all, as Cornelious, Bishop of Rome, did not presently leap into the Episcopal throne, but first passed through all the Ecclesiastical offices, gradually ascending to that sublime dignity.”

OF

INFANT BAPTISM.

OF

INFANT BAPTISM.

In conclusion of our views we deem it expedient to say something on the subject of Infant Baptism. And there being a council called, at an early age, by some of the veterans of the cross, to consider certain business relating to the church, the subject of Infant Baptism was also introduced; we will, therefore, give the following extract, viz.

“ We learn from what Cyprian writes to Fidus, as to the case of infants, of whom you said that they ought

not to be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, and that the ancient law of circumcision should be so far repeated that they should not be baptized till the eighth day. We were all of different opinion. The mercy and grace of God we all judged, should be denied to none ; for if the Lord says in his Gospel, The Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives, but, to save them, how ought we to do our utmost, as far as in us lies, that no soul be lost. Spiritual circumcision should not be impeded by that which is carnal—if even the foulest offenders, when they afterwards believe, remission of sins be granted, and none is prohibited from baptism and grace, how much more should an infant be admitted, who, just born, hath not sinned at all, except that being carnally born according to Adam, he hath contracted the contagion of ancient death in his first birth, who approaches to remission of sins more easily, because not his own actual guilt, but that of another is remitted.

.. Here, in an assembly of sixty-six Pastors, men of approved fidelity and gravity, who had stood the fiery trials of some of the severest persecutions ever known, and who had testified their love to the Lord Jesus Christ ; who appear not to have been wanting in any of the es-

sentia] characteristics of Godliness, a question is brought, not whether infants should be baptized at all, none contradicted this, but whether it is right to baptize them immediately or on the eighth day ; to a man, they all determined to baptize them immediately." This transaction passed in the year 253. See Rev. Jesse Townsend's abridged Church History of Milner, page 131.

SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.



It is presumed that it may be some satisfaction to the Reader to know something of the Writer; he therefore gives the following sketch of his life :

CHRISTOPHER RUSH was born in the state of North Carolina, Cravens county, in the year of our Lord, 1777—brought from darkness to light in 1793—came to New-York in 1798—joined the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1803—licensed to preach in 1815—ordained in 1822, and elected Superintendent of this connexion in 1828, and so has been re-elected every four years until the present date, 1843.

And now, dear friends and brethren, I submit, your humble servant and fellow labourer in the kingdom and patience of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CHRISTOPHER RUSH.

